

PREFACE

This history was originally written by Graham Tanner, O.U.A.C. coach from 1976 to 2007. It was subsequently updated in 2003-04 by the then O.U.A.C. President, Laurence Chandy (Magdalen), using information and illustrations from Graham's personal archive.

March 2010

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1. 1850–87 - In the Beginning

The origins of modern athletics

The first modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896, are commonly, but erroneously, associated with the birth of athletic sports. Whilst foot races and other loosely-related athletic contests date back long before, the first occurrence of an athletic programme or “sports” resembling one of today, took place nearly half a century before the events of 1896.

By the mid-nineteenth century, decidedly plebeian country sports were beginning to be replaced by a host of regular, organised and well-publicised athletics events, with prizes drawing competitors from far afield. The honour of staging the first athletics match and the formation of the first athletic club rests with colleges at Oxford University. The similarities between this first Athletic Sports and a modern day programme of events is quite apparent; these Sports were unintentionally responsible for standardising many of the athletic disciplines that nowadays are practised across the world.

A profound influence for the evolution of athletics described was provided in 1850 by a group of high-spirited undergraduates at Exeter College, as described by Montague Shearman¹ in *Athletics and Football*:

The year was 1850. It was the evening after the College Steeplechase (vulgarly called the “College Grind”). Some four or five congenial spirits, as their manner was, were sipping their wine after hall in the rooms of one, R.F. Bowles... Besides the host there were James Aitken, Geo. Russell, Marcus Southwell, and Halifax Wyatt. The topic was the event of the day, and the unsatisfactory process of negotiating a country on Oxford hacks. “Sooner than ride such a brute again,” said Wyatt whose horse had landed into a road on his head instead of his legs, “I’d run across two miles of country on foot.” “Well why not?” said the others; “let’s have a College foot grind,” and so it was agreed.

Bowles who always had a sneaking love for racing... suggested a race or two on the flat as well. Again the party agreed. The conditions were drawn up, stakes named, officials appointed, and the first meeting for Athletics Sports inaugurated.

On the first afternoon there was to be a “chase,” two miles across country, 24 jumps, 1*l.* entry, 10*s.* forfeit; and on a subsequent afternoon, a quarter of a mile on the flat, 300 yards, 100 yards, 140 yards over 10 flights of hurdles 10 yards apart, one mile, and some other stakes for “beaten horses,” open to members of Exeter College only. The stewards of the ‘Exeter

Autumn Meeting' were R.F.Bowles and John Broughton; Secretary, H.C.Glanville; Clerk of Course, E.Ranken and a well-known sporting tradesman in Oxford, Mr. Randall, was asked to be Judge...

Notice of the meeting, with a list of the stakes, was posted in the usual place - a black board in the porter's lodge. Plenty of entries were made, in no stake less than 10: for the steeplechase there were 24 who started.

Among the competitors were Jas .Aitken, J. Scott, Geo. Russell, Jno. Broughton, R.F.Bowles, D.Giles, H.J.Cheales, H.Wyatt, Jas. Woodhouse, C.J.Parker, P.Wilson, M.Southwell, H.C.Glanville, H.Collins, E.Knight, and some nine others.

The betting was - 2 to 1 v. Aitken, 2 to 1 v. Cheales, 8 to 1 v. Giles, 9 to 1 v. Wyatt, 10 to 1 v. Parker, 10 to 1 v. Scott, 12 to 1 v. Broughton, 15 to 1 v. Woodhouse.

The course chosen was on a flat marshy farm at Binsey, near the Severn Bridge Road: it was very wet, some fields swimming in water, the brook's bank high, and a soft take-off, which meant certain immersion for most, if not all the competitors. Twenty-four went to the post, not 24 hand-conditioned athletes in running "toggerly," but 24 strong active youngsters in cricket shoes and flannels, some in fair condition, some very much the reverse, but all determined to "do or die." Plenty of folk on horse and foot came to see this novelty...and in this instance, judging from the excitement, and the encouragement given to the competitors, the novelty was much appreciated.

As about half the 24 starters left the post as if they were only going to run a few hundred yards, they were necessarily soon done with. Aitken, gradually coming through all there, had the best of the race until one field from home, when Wyatt and Scott, who had been gradually creeping up, ran level. They jumped the last fence together. Wyatt, who landed on firmer ground, was quickest on his legs, and ran in a comparatively easy winner; there was a tremendous struggle for the second place, which was just obtained by Aitken.

The time, according to the present notion of running, must no doubt have been slow, but the ground was deep, the fences big, and all the competitors were heavily handicapped by wet flannels bedraggling their legs.

The History of the Oxford University Athletic Club

Of the flat races, which were held in Port Meadow, on unlevelled turf, no authentic record has been preserved of the winners of all the events. The hurdle race was won by E. Knight, R.F. Bowles being second. The 100 yards by Wyatt, and he also won one or two of the shorter races; but for the mile he had to carry some pounds of shot in an old-fashioned shot-belt round his loins, and ran second to Aitken, who won. Listen to this, ye handicappers of the present day...!

Such is the history of the first set of athletic sports.”

The claim of Oxford to be the founder of modern athletics is further strengthened by the publication in 1870 of two triptychs entitled *Athletic Sports at Oxford*, showing on one, the water jump in the steeplechase, putting the stone and the one mile; and on the other, a sack race entitled “Nisus and Euryalls,” throwing the hammer entitled “The Doom of Acsisus” and “Atalanta’s Race.”

In 1851, Exeter followed up the autumn meeting of 1850 with a summer meeting on Bullingdon Green, when it is believed both a high and long jump were included in the programme. By 1852, it was considered a reasonable form of sport for a school or college to stage a meeting for competitions in the old English sports of running, jumping and the throwing of weights. However, the idea of contests between the universities in athletic sports, in the same way that they were already competing in cricket and rowing, was still in the future.

Exeter College remained unique until 1855 when sports were first held in Cambridge by St. John’s and Emmanuel. At Oxford, Balliol, Wadham, Pembroke and Worcester followed the example of Exeter in 1856, then Oriel in 1857, Merton in 1858 and Christ Church in 1859, so that by 1861, separate college meetings had become widespread. University sports were founded at Cambridge in 1857.

Formation of the Oxford University Athletic Club

Following a decade of activity at college level, the founding of the university athletic club took place on November 15th 1860. In a similar vein to what had gone before, the club was founded primarily as a means of establishing University Sports, as detailed in the club’s very first minute book, which exists to this day:

“In order to institute in the University of Oxford, Annual Games, consisting of Footraces and other Athletic Sports, a meeting was held in Mr E. Arkwright’s rooms, Merton College...

The proposal of the Games was welcomed throughout the University, and the Stewards determined that, in order that the games might take place that term (Michaelmas 1860) the necessary arrangements should be begun at once. It was

therefore agreed that the representatives of each college and hall, should collect subscriptions with all possible dispatch, and pay the proceeds into the Old Bank.”

Of the 23 gentlemen present at that historic first meeting, the following were elected as Stewards of the new club:

Hon. Secretary	Mr E.Arkwright	Merton
Hon Treasurer	Mr J.G.Watkins	Christ Church
Other Stewards	Mr. H.F.Blair	Corpus Christi
	Mr. J.C.Thynne	Exeter
	Mr. H.B.Middleton	Magdalen

With the fundamental elements of a club – i.e. a committee (or in this case, Stewards), constitution, rules and payment of annual subscriptions – in place, O.U.A.C. had been born and on Tuesday, December 4th 1860, the first Oxford University Sports were held, with 12 events contested. One of these events was the University steeplechase title held over, “...two miles of fair hunting countryside.” When 38 entries from 16 colleges lined up “...amid torrents of rain and mud ankle deep...,” HRH the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, elected to give a donation of £100 towards the purchase of a perpetual challenge cup for the winner. This hideous piece of silverware, albeit somewhat battered, still existed in 1951 as the prize for the University Sports three mile title.

Event no.7 was “throwing the hammer; three trials allowed.” The entry was 16 and John Dolphin (Oriol) won with a throw of 63ft (19m20). The prize for winning was a solid silver tankard, then worth £4 16s.

In recent times, there has been some debate as to which of the two university clubs is the older. However, it is clear that O.U.A.C. was in existence by November 1860 and, although Cambridge staged its first University Sports in 1857, the formal inauguration of a university club there happened later, as described by Richard Webster (Trinity) – late Baron Alverstone – in his autobiography, *Recollections of Bar and Bench*:

“When I went up to Cambridge, and until the year 1863, there was little or no organization in the control of athletics. The money required for athletic sports was collected by a few energetic men who managed to obtain from the members of the University a sum of between £80 and £90, sufficient to pay expenses and provide prizes from year to year. In 1863, I, together with my great friend Percy M. Thornton of Jesus, C.B.Lawes, and one or two others, started the Cambridge University Athletic Club. I persuaded nearly all the colleges to establish their own athletic clubs, and to pay a capitation fee of 2s. 6d. per member to the University Athletic Club. For this all members of the college had the use of Fenner’s for practice and

EXETER AUTUMN MEETING.

STEWARDS.—R. F. BOWLES, ESQ., J. A. BROUGHTON, ESQ.
 SECRETARY.—H. C. GLANVILLE, ESQ.
 CLERK OF THE COURSE.—H. RANKEN, ESQ. JUDGE.—MR. RANDALL.

The Welcome Sweepstakes, of a quarter of a mile :—

Mr. Page .. Broughton .. Collins .. Glanville .. Bowles .. Cole .. Johnstone		Mr. Wyatt .. Winsford .. Marshall .. Charles .. Knight .. Nichols .. Atken
--	--	--

The Bancalari Sweepstakes, 300 yards and a distance. Heats :—

Mr. Broughton .. Page .. Glanville .. Bowles .. Wyatt		Mr. Winsford .. Atken .. Marshall .. Manley .. Terry
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The Jonathon Sweepstakes, 100 yards :—

Mr. Broughton .. Bowles .. Chapman .. Collins .. North .. Johnstone .. Charles		Mr. Paul .. Todd .. Medley .. Wyatt .. Knight .. Yonge		Mr. Stables .. Atken 2 .. Venables .. Scott .. Crossin .. Wingfield
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A Hurdle Race, over 10 flights, at 10 yards apart, 140 yards :—

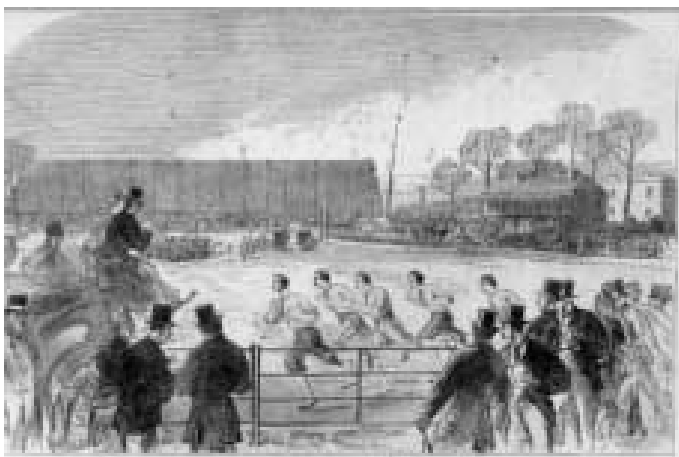
Mr. Chapman .. Bowles .. Knight .. Broughton .. Wyatt .. Charles		Mr. Venables .. Scott .. Wilson .. Newman .. Atken
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The Scurry Stakes, 150 yards, to name and close on the day of the races.

The Aristocratic Stakes, of 50 yards, to name and close on the day of the races.

The Consolation Stakes, for beaten horses, 100 yards.

The programme to the Exeter Sports of 1850, arguably the first athletics meeting of the modern era.



The 'Varsity Sports at the Beaufort House ground in 1865:

The mile race won by Samuel Scott (Magdalen) in 4:40.4. Note the military band performing in the infield (probably, the Grenadier Guards), which was commonplace at both the Inter-'Varsity and University Sports.



OXFORD UNIVERSITY GRAND ANNUAL GAMES.

These Games will this Year take place on Tuesday, Dec. 4, commencing at Eleven a.m., and will consist of the following, as nearly as possible in this Order:—

- 1.—A Flat Race of 100 Yards.
- 2.—A Hurdle Race of 120 Yards, over 10 Flights.
- 3.—A Running High Jump. Three trials allowed.
- 4.—A Flat Race of One Mile.
- 5.—A Running Long Jump. Three trials allowed.
- 6.—A Hurdle Race of One Quarter Mile, over 12 Flights.
- 7.—Throwing the Hammer. Three trials allowed.
- 8.—A Flat Race of 300 Yards.
- 9.—Throwing the Cricket Ball. Three trials allowed.
- 10.—Steeple Chase, over not less than Two Miles of fair hunting country.
For the Challenge Cup.
N.B.—No Entrance Money is required for this Race.
- 11.—Sack Race.
- 12.—Consolation Stakes, One Quarter of a Mile Flat Race.

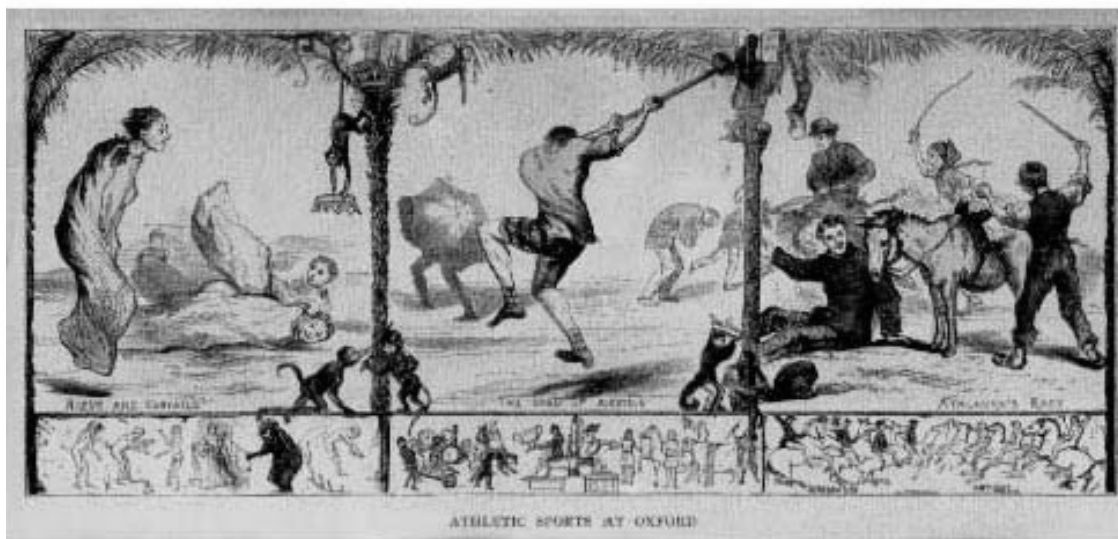
N.B.—All Undergraduates are qualified as Candidates for these Races who have subscribed 2s. 6d. to the O.U.A.G. Fund.

II. Gentlemen, intending to enter for any of these Races, must give in their names and entrance money, consisting of Five Shillings for each Race, to the Representative of their College, BEFORE TUESDAY, Nov. 27, at One o'clock p.m.

III.—Gentlemen upon payment of One Sovereign are qualified for any number of Races, for which however they must duly enter their names, as Candidates.

By order of the Committee,
(Signed) E. ARKWRIGHT, HON. SEC.

The programme for the first Oxford University Grand Annual Games in December 1860.



Two triptychs from 1870 depicting *Athletic Sports at Oxford*.

The 'Varsity Sports at the Beaufort House ground in 1865.

An Oxford athlete in the Shot Put.



for their college sports, and they were provided with all the necessary apparatus for the due carrying out of the sports. The first Secretary was H.J.Kennedy of Trinity Hall; he was followed by P.M.Thornton, who was, in turn, succeeded by myself. The establishment of the University Athletic Club was a great success, and when I left Cambridge in the year 1865, the Club had a balance of £400, and has always since that time been in a good financial position, able to assist in the improvement of Fenner's, and in promoting sports between the various colleges."

The following year, the University Sports were held on Thursday, November 28th and owing to a misunderstanding between some of the qualifiers and the starter, the final of the 100 yards was re-run on the Magdalen College Cricket School ground. The account in *Bell's Life* states that the first prize was bestowed upon Arthur Poole (Trinity) who performed the distance in, "...something under 10 seconds." Here perhaps, we have the earliest reported instance of any amateur athlete bettering "even time."

By 1862, the O.U.A.C. Minute book resolved that, "...the three hundred yards flat be changed into one quarter mile," though no reason is given. In 1866, O.U.A.C. attempted to standardize the height of hurdles, with the minute book stating that, "...the hurdles shall be 3ft 6" in the ground." Unsurprisingly, one of the original events from the 1860 Sports, "...Quarter Mile over twelve flights...", certainly worthy of being described as the man-killer of track and field, was somewhat slow to catch on.

2. 1864 - The first Inter-'Varsity Sports

The idea of instituting Inter-'Varsity Sports originated at Cambridge, where Percy Thornton (Jesus), Charles Lawesⁱ (Trinity) and Richard Websterⁱⁱ (Trinity) were mainly responsible for the sending of a challenge to Oxford, where Lord Jersey (Balliol) and Clement Jackson (Magdalen Hall) accepted.

The first Inter-'Varsity Sports were held on the Christ Church Ground, Oxford on Saturday, March 5th 1864, the events being 100 yards, 440 yards, the mile, the steeplechase (about two miles), 120 yards hurdles, 200 yards hurdles (both with 10 flights of hurdles), the long jump and the high jump. It is interesting to note that *The Times* merited the match worthy of a leader, commenting that, "...the development of athletics at the Universities would do much to counteract the evil effects of rowing on the physique of undergraduates."

The performances of 1864 make interesting reading, in particular the comment that the, "...Cambridge representatives had little hope of beating Francis Gooch (in the long jump), who on several occasions had covered a distance exceeding six yards in a single leap, a feat beyond the capacity of any but an exceptional athlete."

With the match decided upon the winning of events - a system of scoring in use until 1938 - Oxford won four of the first five events (100 yards; high jump; 440 yards; and long jump against 120 yards hurdles), but the remaining three (200 yards hurdles, the mile and the steeplechase) were won by Cambridge, and as a result the match was drawn.

Surprisingly, the Oxford distance runners had competed in trials only two days before and one can only speculate as to the result had they been given sufficient time to recover from their endeavours.

In 1865, the Inter-'Varsity Sports were held at Cambridge on the Fenner's Ground, the only time that Cambridge hosted the match (except for the 1939-45 war period) until the advent of the Wilberforce Road track in 1995. For this match two new events, putting the shot and throwing the cricket ball, were added to the programme, although the 200 yards hurdles race was omitted. Further, the steeplechase – in effect a cross-country race - was replaced by a two-mile race on the track.

With the match held on March 25th, it was not for the last time that events took place in inclement weather, with the later laps of the two miles run in a heavy fall of snow and sleet. The 1865 match was won by Cambridge by 6 events to 3. A contemporary report suggests that Oxford demonstrated considerably less enthusiasm for the competition than did Cambridge. Evidence of this was provided by the shot put where the result was based upon the aggregate of putting with one hand (the Cambridge style) and putting with two hands (the Oxford style); the Oxford athletes performing less well in the unfamiliar style than did

those from Cambridge. In response to Oxford's relative lack of enthusiasm, the *Oxford Undergraduates' Journal* published appeals begging those chosen to represent the University in the Sports, "...to show more self-denial in their training."

The 1866 match was held once again on the Christ Church Ground consisting of the same nine events with Cambridge winning by 6 events to 3. In the hammer, the Oxford competitors Morgan (Magdalen Hall) and Walter Croker (Trinity) fared badly, and in the process, came near to killing some of the spectators. In the shot, Morgan and Charles Cotes (Christ Church) suffered similar problems as they were required to put with one hand rather than the two-handed overhead throw preferred by Oxford. Throwing the cricket ball was also included for the final time.

The 1866 match brought to an end the pattern of home and away matches, following a disturbance at Oxford, described as a:

"...display of high spirits at the London & North Western Stationⁱⁱⁱ, where the special train left and hosts parted from guests. The parting only temporarily damped the gaiety of both parties."

The match had in fact broken up in uproar after a dead-heat in the two miles (between John Laing (Christ Church) and Charles Long (Trinity, Cambridge)) led to a fight between students, punters and bookmakers and prompted Clement Jackson (Magdalen Hall) to comment, "...the sound of which dinning into the midnight, I can still hear."

In future, the venue of the 'Varsity Match would be held in London. The 1867 match took place at the Beaufort House Grounds, Walham Green, with Cambridge winning by 6 events to 3.

By now a three-lap-to-the-mile cinder track had been laid down at Fenner's, providing the Light Blues with better opportunities for training. This together with a well-ordered system of College meetings provided the motivation for an increase in both numbers and enthusiasm. At Oxford, facilities for athletics were fewer, practice was at best intermittent and College Sports less numerous.

For the 1868 match, again held at Beaufort House, the three miles replaced the previous two-mile race, providing Oxford with their first victory in the series by 5 events to 4. Three amateur records were broken, all by Oxford athletes: Thomas Batson (Lincoln) in the hammer, Alick Tosswill (Oriental) in the long-jump and The Hon. Frederick O'Grady (St. John's) in the high jump.

In 1869, the Sports were held unusually early on March 18th, with a low temperature, high winds and a heavy shower of rain during the match. For the first time, the match was held at the new ground of the Amateur Athletic Club at Lillie

Bridge, where it remained until 1887. It is reported that the conditions were unsatisfactory with the cinder path having failed to consolidate and that the recently laid turf handicapped the competitors in the field events. The match was won by Cambridge by 5½ events to 3½; Oxford being handicapped by the absence of Tosswill who had cleared in excess of 22ft at the Oxford Sports. Additionally, Francis Waite's (Balliol) throw of over 100ft in the hammer failed to win the event as Henry Leeke (Trinity, Cambridge) managed 103ft 11" (31m68).

Marshall Brooks

The 1876 match brought over 12,000 spectators to Lillie Bridge, the object of interest being the Oxford high jumper, Marshall Brooks (Brasenose) who had already cleared the outstanding height of six feet. Brooks, already a rugby international, eliminated the opposition and then had the bar pushed right up. He stalked straight up and from a grass take-off, cat-jumped and amidst thunderous applause walked back under the bar, the height of which was measured at 6ft 2.5" (1m89), a world's best. It was not until 1887 that Brooks' world record was surpassed and as a 'Varsity Match record, it stood for 72 years. With Brooks winning the long jump as well, Oxford won the match by 6 events to 3.

In this connection, the great athletics commentator Frederick Webster made these observations:

“The first athlete to abandon the antiquated, but natural style of high jumping was the Hon. M.J.Brooks of Rugby School and Oxford University, whose Oxford and Cambridge Sports record of 6ft 2.5" made in 1876, remained unequalled and unbroken in 1945. Not only did he gain Oxford Blues for the high jump when he raised the record to 5ft 9.5" (1m77) in 1874, in 1875 when he was second at 5ft 7.25" (1m70) and in the long jump in 1876, when he won that event at 21ft 8.5" (6m) and made the present Inter-Varsity high jump record of 6ft 2.5" (1m89), but he also achieved a Blue as a rugby football full back in 1873. In 1876, he took the English Championship when he jumped over 6ft (1m82), there being no other entrant. He was then just 21 years of age.

In that year, the famous Scottish professional athlete Donald Dinnie, wrote to the Press, seeking to prove on *a priori* grounds that it was a sheer impossibility for any human being ever to jump so high as Brooks was reported to have and had done.

When jumping, Brooks ran straight at the bar and once told me before he died a few years ago, that although he could throw his feet up as high as he wanted, his main difficulty was getting his arms and particularly his elbows over the bar. He ran with his knees tucked up in front, took his body over with a forward jerk

and landed on his toes. The late Sir Montague Shearman once told me that when Brooks first cleared 6ft, so great was the enthusiasm that the O.U.A.C. Hon Treasurer tossed his top hat into the air, but had to retrieve it sadly from a deep puddle on the old Marston Athletic Ground.”

The University Sports of March 25th 1876, the contemporary equivalent of Cuppers, warranted a report in the *City Herald*:

“These Sports commenced on Thursday on the Marston Running Grounds. The weather was cold and windy on the first day, but was on Friday almost beyond description, a perfect hurricane accompanied by sleet and snow delaying proceedings for some time. Many events were decided during the two days, chief being the high jump of Mr M.J.Brooks, the president of O.U.A.C., who excelled all previous authentically recorded performances by covering 6ft. This gentleman had previously jumped 5ft 11.25” and even now seems improving as in a further attempt on Friday, he nearly did 6ft 1” (1m86). The mile, 11 yards hurdles and Stones (the Shot Put) events in the inter-university programme also produced worthy champions in the persons, Messrs. E.Nicolls (Christ Church), Nash (Lincoln), Shearman (St John’s), Scott (BNC) and Hodges (Queens) who will doubtless render good account of themselves on April 7th (the Varsity Match). These Sports were concluded on Saturday afternoon in the presence of a large company, including many ladies. The weather was in keeping with that usually experienced at Marston, being bitterly cold with a strong wind facing the competitors in the run-in, which somewhat mitigated against the best time. The Sport was excellent, the whole of the events – two handicaps, the three mile race and quarter mile and broad jump – all being well contested. Mr Brooks followed up his success of Friday by carrying off the prize for the long jump wherein he covered the enormous distance of 21ft 11” ; Mr Surtees of University, being at his heels with a jump of 21ft 8.5”.

The three mile race was booked a certainty for Mr Grenfell of Balliol, as it was generally known that Mr Stevenson of New was not wound up, but the judgment of the knowing ones was upset by Mr Goodwin of Jesus, who was second in the mile race on Monday to Mr Nicolls of Christchurch. The quarter-mile victory of Mr Metcalf of University who won the half mile on Friday from Nicolls too, was unlooked for, as Solly was regarded a probable winner.”

Brooks’ presidency was important, not only for his athletic performances, but additionally for the introduction of standard competitions. *The Oxford and*

Cambridge Undergraduate's Journal of March 9th 1876, reports as follows:

“A new feature in athletics sports at Oxford has been instituted by the president of the O.U.A.C. in the form of standard competitions. These were contested on Monday afternoon, when all members of the University and the public generally were admitted to the ground free of charge. The weather was fine but a high wind which prevailed was a drawback to running men and in consequence, a second more than the allotted time was granted for the quarter mile. The attendance was not very large and consisted mostly of members of the university. Prizes were offered for the following events – quarter mile, time not to exceed 53s (raised to 54s); the weight, distance not less than 35ft; throwing the hammer, distance not less than 105ft; broad jump, distance not less than 20ft 6”; high jump, height not less than 5ft 6”. The quarter mile was accomplished by Merrivale of New and Solly of Magdalen, Solly’s time being especially good. Treffery of Magdalen and Nash of Lincoln succeeded in clearing the hurdles within the prescribed time, Nash being rather the quickest, failing to clear his hurdles in good form. Brooks of Brasenose made a capital jump for a broad distance and doubtless had he taken off better, he would have gone a long way to rival the best jump yet made. As it was, he took off nearly a foot from the starting board and then managed to clear 21ft 4”. Julian of Trinity and Lucas of Balliol also jumped well but failed to reach the stated distance. Holmes of Brasenose, could not reach the distance with the hammer – a distance which he had previously, to our knowledge, done comparatively easily.”

Clement Nugent Jackson

At the Oxford Sports of 1879, a testimonial was made to Clement Jackson by the then club president, Albert Goodwin of Jesus^{iv} (later the Reverend Goodwin). Jackson had completed twelve years service to the club as Senior Treasurer, a position he was to retain for nearly half a century more though it is unlikely that any of those present at the testimonial could ever have predicted this. Jackson’s own athletics career, which included winning a Blue in the 1867 ‘Varsity Sports and running 16.0s for the 120 yards hurdles, a national record and believed by many to be a world’s best, had been cut short by a foot injury sustained when he spiked a hidden oyster shell while trying to match the hurdling of W.G.Grace.

During those first twelve years as Treasurer, Jackson had perhaps done more than anyone in bringing O.U.A.C. to its position of influence in the world of athletic sports and in doing so, moulding the development of the sport itself. In response to the president’s words, Clement Jackson made the following speech before the club’s members:

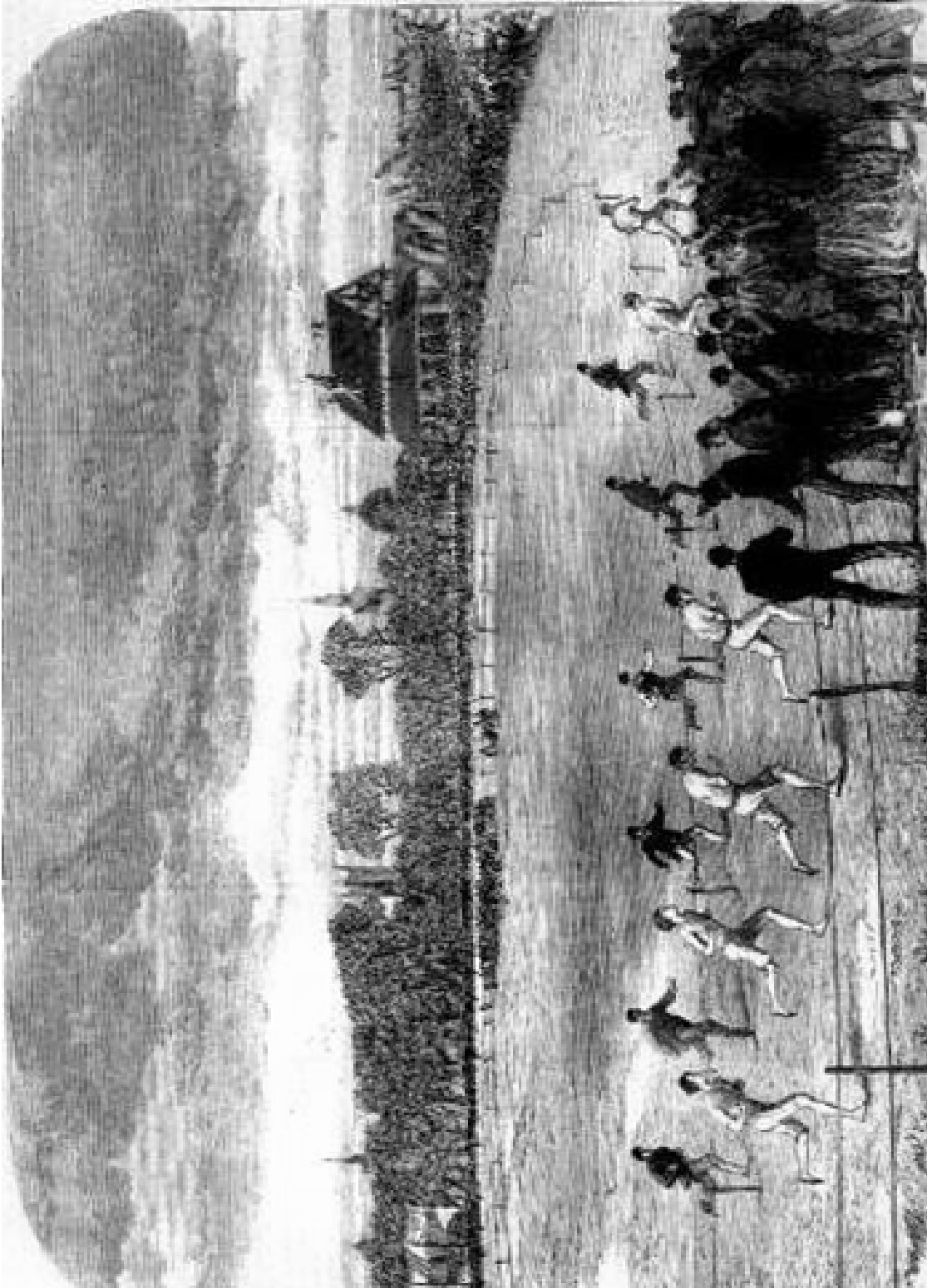
“Mr Goodwin and gentlemen. I had always been under the impression that testimonials were very bad things and that the persons who received them were very bad persons - until today...It seems a long time ago since it first occurred to an old President of the club, the Earl of Jersey (1867-68), my contemporary and friend, that it would be quite possible to establish a new club for the purposes of athletic sports, alongside of and in friendly rivalry with elder sister societies, the Boat Club and the Cricket Club...I won't say that the new club met with opposition from the other two, but I will say that there might have been some rivalry and that the antagonism was at all events, delicate...Our senior critics had told us that running meant certain ruination here and I don't know what hereafter...And gentlemen, our practical retort was this – whilst they condemned us, we went quietly on our way, only too pleased if cold Marston created for us warm friendships...

Nothing astonishes me more nowadays, than to take up in the long vacation, some sporting paper, say *The Field* or *Bell's Life* and to read in them the report of athletic meetings which have taken place all over the country. There seems to be sport now in every village, in every provincial town and large meetings in connection with every centre of industry and every important county district. For this rapidly increasing expansion I maintain that you (the club) are and have been directly responsible.

Athletes of all classes have looked to the action of O.U.A.C. to guide the best tone and interest they pursue; it is for this reason that you have been as you may be again, constituted a final court of appeal. Such an appeal was a distinct recognition of what I called your supremacy, a supremacy I was always very zealous to uphold as I am sure you will be also.”

A contemporary report of the 1880 'Varsity Match recorded that:

“For some unaccountable reason, the attendance at the Inter-University Sports at Lilliebridge was decidedly smaller than usual, which was more singular since the day was beautifully fine and there was every prospect of some splendid sport. This promise was amply fulfilled as the Quarter, the Mile and the Three Miles were well worth the long journey to witness. In the Mile, B.R.Wise (Queen's) had no trouble repeating his victory of last year and though not the least pressure at the finish, broke the tape in the splendid time of 4:28. The starting in the hurdles which fell to C.J.P Lawrence (Corpus) was even worse than it usually is at these sports and we cannot say more than this. Of course the Three Miles was a great event and for the first time

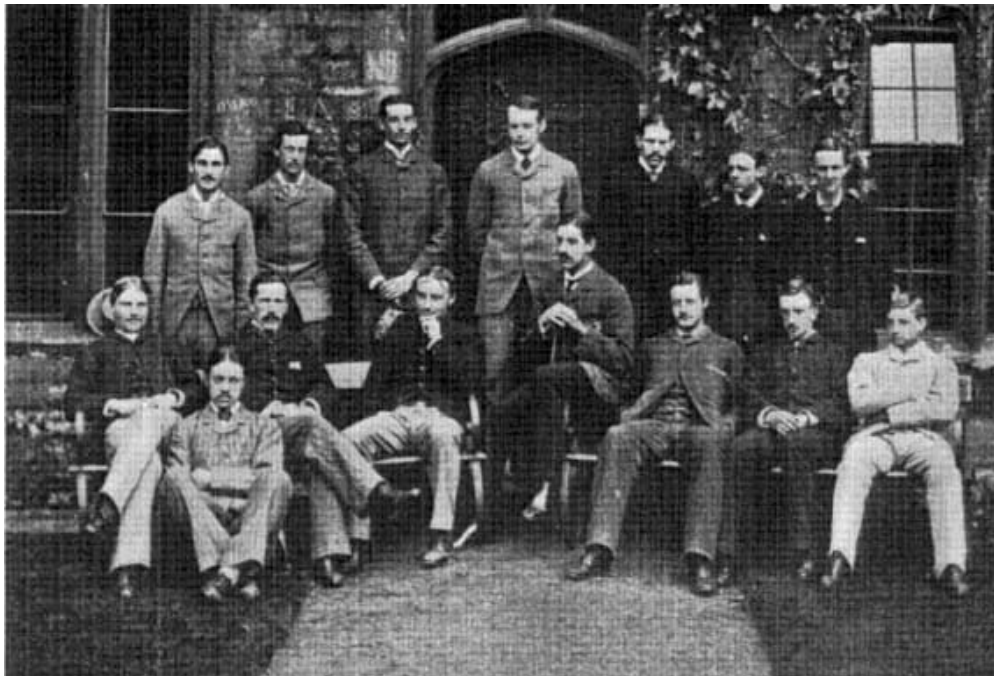


The Two-mile Race in the 1866 'Varsity Sports, held at the Christ Church Cricket Ground.



Brooks' team of 1876

- Top Row (l-to-r): A.Goodwin, M.Shearman, F.B.Webster, R.V.Surtees,
J.A.Fraser, E.L.Treffry, C.G.Steel, C.P.Lewis.
Middle Row: C.H.Hodges, M.J.Brooks, E.R.Nash, E.R.J.Nicolls,
E.C.M.Evans.
Bottom Row: C.P.Lucas, W.H.Grenfell, C.H.T.Metcalf, J.G.Hester,
H.S.Holme, G.E.Solly.



O.U.A.C. team photo of 1879^v

- Top Row (l-to-r): J.A.L.Fellowes, F.R.Benson, M.R.Portal, M.Shearman,
C.W.M.Kemp, B.R.Wise, G.P.C.Lawrence.
Bottom Row: H.W.Macaulay, B.H.Latter, A.F.Hills, C.V.Gorton,
E.C.Treppin, Hon.W.N.Bruce, D.L.Clarke, W.D.Hamilton.

since the meeting has been established, Cambridge managed to win it. W.W.Hough^{vi} finishing more than a hundred yards in front of F.R.Benson (New College) and accomplished 15:01.4, a time far better than has ever previously been done by any University men and which as far as we remember, has never been beaten by any amateur except Gibb, who no doubt, in his best day could have gone well inside 15 mins. The Light Blues carried off six of the nine events.”

In 1881, Hough and Benson met again in the three mile race, the final event of the day and the decider, with Oxford and Cambridge both having won four prior events. Croome (Magdalen) reported of the race:

“1881 – Oxford was expected to win pretty easily but two of their certainties failed to materialise and the score was four all when Benson (New, Oxford) and Hough (Corpus Christi, Cambridge) came out to do battle again in the three miles. They ran a memorable race, which caused a good deal of discussion; for Hough, who was short of training and much distressed in the last mile, bored his opponent badly in his efforts to keep the lead, and twice knocked him out of his stride. When the incidents occurred many considered that a foul had taken place, but what happened afterwards showed that if a technical offence had been committed it certainly was not intentional. After Benson had got by, Hough with the whole width of the track to himself, could not keep straight and at last ran into the low bank of the turf. He fell so exhausted that he could not get up. Obviously he had run himself blind and did not know where he was when he got in Benson’s way.”

During the 19-year stay at Lillie Bridge, the event programme remained unchanged and at the end of this particular series of matches, the running score read Oxford 11, Cambridge 12, with one match (1864) tied.

Iffley Road

At this time (1887), Oxford still did not possess a cinder track; it is reported that Marshall Brooks’ jump of 6ft 1/8” (1m83) at the University Sports in 1876 was performed in a swampy cricket field at Marston^{vii}. By the early 1880s, a three-lap-to-the mile cinder path at Iffley Road was in use by the club. The move from Marston to Iffley Road was masterminded by the club’s senior treasurer Clement Jackson.

The Iffley Road track was later described by Roger Bannister^{viii} as being:

“...like a cross-country course, though not as bad as the Cambridge track at Fenner’s! We did not know quite what

happened round the bottom bend behind the long grass. The runners disappeared down the nine-foot drop on the back straight before they climbed the hill to the finish. We only thought it strange that a different runner often emerged first! I was tired of being told that Lovelock had run a 4:12 mile on this old track.”

Additionally of course, competitors ran in a clock-wise direction.

The Amateur Athletic Association

The year 1880 saw O.U.A.C. at the forefront of the inauguration of the Amateur Athletic Association. The members of the club who were prime movers in this venture were Clement Jackson (now 33 and a tutor at Hertford), Bernhard Wise, 21, a scholar at Queen’s and President of O.U.A.C., and Montague Shearman, 22, a graduate of St John’s and a former President of O.U.A.C., at the time reading for the bar.

It is contemporaneously reported that the support of Cambridge for the venture was at best “...very lukewarm.” However, undeterred Jackson, Shearman and Wise booked the banqueting hall of the Randolph Hotel for Saturday, April 24th. Delegates were invited from the Northern Counties A.A.A., the Midland Counties A.A.A. and all the main athletic and cross-country clubs in the south. When 28 delegates arrived at the Randolph, they were handed a draft set of resolutions, among them the definition of an amateur, which had already been adopted in the north and midlands. With Bernhard Wise as Chairman and with a general invitation to dinner afterwards, the Amateur Athletic Association was harmoniously set up.

3. 1888-1914 – The Queen’s Club Years

From 1888, the ‘Varsity Match became established at Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court, on the old three-laps-to-the-mile track and remained there until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914.

During this period the programme remained unchanged except for the introduction of the 880 yards in 1899, although rather oddly it was temporarily dropped from the programme in 1902. A highlight of this period was provided by Francis Cross (New College) in the mile who achieved four consecutive victories, setting a new match record in 1889 with a time of 4:23.6, only for William Pollock-Hill (Keble) to lop two seconds off that record the following year. Cross might have enjoyed further success at the Sports had the half-mile already been established as a ‘Varsity event; he broke the world record for it in 1888, running 1:54.4.

Another world record breaker from Oxford was Wesley Coe (Hertford and USA) whose record of 46ft 6” in the shot was set in 1905, a year after he won a silver medal at the St. Louis Olympics. Walter Henderson (Trinity), a contemporary of Coe in O.U.A.C., had this to say of his team-mate’s performance at the 1902 ‘Varsity Sports:

“The year was chiefly remarkable for the weight-putting of the redoubtable American, W.W.Coe, who broke – nay, rather shivered into smithereens – the existing Varsity record of 39ft 1” made by J.H.Ware (Brasenose) in 1886. Coe beat this by over 4.5ft, doing 43ft 10”. I was one of the three unfortunates who had to go through the dismal farce of appearing to rival him. Coe’s turn to “put” came last of the four. We poor minnows had done our paltry distance. We knew what we were in for – exposure; and what he was out for - record. The Triton advanced, hurled his massive form forward and a howl of mingled applause and amusement greeted the arrival of the ball some 10ft beyond our efforts.

How hard Coe tried to teach us to put the weight at Oxford! He would frown and ponder; puzzled at our inability; and then, seizing the shot, would stand still, saying, “See here now!” and without taking any run, toss the thing 2ft ahead of our furthest marks.”

In the 1905 match, Charles Henderson-Hamilton (Trinity) further reduced the mile record to 4:17.8, a performance which withstood all assaults, including those of Jack Lovelock (Exeter and New Zealand), until Roger Bannister’s (Exeter) third win in 1949. The middle distances were becoming renowned as an area of Oxford strength, a feature of the club that has only been reinforced with time.

Patrick Stormonth-Darling (New College), president of O.U.A.C. in 1909 and

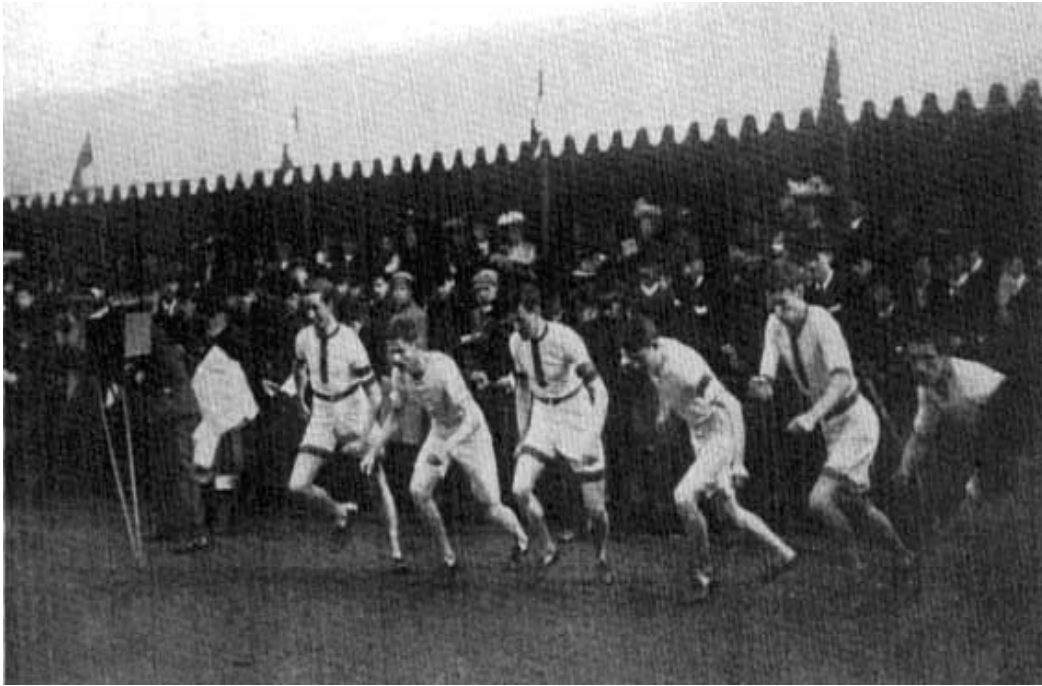
twice winner of the Varsity 880 yards, commented on his initiation to the club and introduction to another exceptional half-miler, Kenneth Cornwallis (University):

“I shall always remember my first introduction to athletics at Oxford, as it was a somewhat painful one. I had only been up a few days and had all the freshmen’s awe of Blues and naturally I felt much honoured when I received a note from the secretary of the O.U.A.C. asking me to go down to the running ground to meet the president, K.Cornwallis. I remember Cornwallis was most kind, but asked me to change and do a lap for him to see. Quite untrained, I tore round one lap and immediately had a bad attack of cramp; however, Cornwallis said, “That will do, you must get into training.” Oxford were very lucky to have such a fine president as Cornwallis for two years (1905, 1906). His keenness and wonderful running did athletics at Oxford an immense amount of good. Every devotee of any form of sport always has his own particular idol or idols. I have many idols amongst runners, but I do not hesitate to say that Cornwallis and Catorⁱ were far and away the two finest runners I have ever seen. Cornwallis was 6ft 3” in height and was beautifully made; possessed of a great raking stride, he covered the ground in a wonderful way and unlike many very tall runners, with very little roll. There was no more disheartening sight than to see Cornwallis’s back in a race, when one was running against him. I remember watching that back for three-quarters of the distance in the half-mile in the Oxford Sports of 1906. It seemed to become more and more relentless until it finally faded from my blurred vision. His record for the Inter-Varsity half-mile of 1:54.8, which he did in 1904, is likely to stand for many a dayⁱⁱ. He also holds the record of being the only runner who has won the half and quarter on the same day in the Inter-Varsity Sportsⁱⁱⁱ.”

1912 Olympic Games and Oxford’s first gold medal

In light of Oxford’s talented middle distance athletes of this period and with hindsight of the successes that were to come for later generations of Dark Blue milers, it seems somewhat appropriate that the club’s first Olympic Champion achieved his gold in the blue riband event. Arnold Strode-Jackson (Brasenose) arrived at Oxford in 1910 and two years later, he won the mile in the ‘Varsity Sports with a confident and well-executed race. On breaking the tape, he was embraced by his proud uncle, Clement Jackson, the O.U.A.C. Blue who had by now served the club as Senior Treasurer and coach for almost half a century.

Later that year, at Stockholm, he won the greatest prize, beating the Americans Abel Kiviat and Norman Taber^{iv}, who was to go up to St. John’s as a Rhodes Scholar in 1913, by a matter of yards in the run-in.



The start of a mile race at the Inter-'Varsity Sports at Queen's Club in the early 1900s.



The impressive stature of Kenneth Cornwallis (University), three time winner of the Varsity 880 yards (1904–1906) and once winner of the Varsity 440 yards (1906).



Left: Wesley Coe (Balliol) in the shot.

Below: Arnold Strode-Jackson (Brasenose) pictured winning the 1500m at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics by one tenth of a second. His time of 3:56.8 was an Olympic record.





Clement Jackson congratulates his nephew, Arnold Strode-Jackson, on winning the mile at the 1912 'Varsity Sports.



Charles Burgess Fry as depicted by Spy as "Oxford Athletics" in *Vanity Fair*.



Above left: Fry's world-record-equalling leap of 23ft 6.5" (7m17) in 1892.

Left: Relaxing at home in later life.

Charles Burgess Fry

In addition to these middle distance successes, a high point of Oxford athletics during this period was provided by Charles Fry (Wadham), who won the long jump from 1892 to 1894, setting a new 'Varsity record in 1892 with 23ft 5" (7m13) which was only inferior to his performance seven days earlier of 23ft 6.5" (7m17) at the Iffley Road track, this mark equalling the world record.

Charles Fry is regarded as one the world's greatest ever all-round sportsmen; in addition to his success in athletics, Fry was an international cricketer and footballer, captaining all three sports within one year of his time at Oxford. He also narrowly missed out on a rugby Blue due to injury and played in the 1902 F.A. Cup Final for Southampton.

His busy career included standing for parliament as a Liberal three times, commanding a naval training school, being a magazine editor and writer of numerous books on cricket, spending a short period in Hollywood and acting as a delegate to the League of Nations.

Contemporaneous reports of Oxford athletics in 1893 read as follows:

"The University Sports at Oxford and Cambridge, this year produced three very fine achievements, one of them, absolutely phenomenal. This was the clearing of 23ft 6.5" in the long jump by the Oxford athlete C.B.Fry. It was feared that his studies would prevent him obtaining sufficient practise to enable him to improve his 23ft 5" of last year, but he has succeeded in spite of drawbacks, in tying with the amateur record of the world, the prestigious distance which had previously been cleared by an American athlete, C.S.Reber. With the same attention which American athletes pay to practise in their particular métier, Fry may well aim to have the record all to himself some day. Looking forward to the Inter-Varsity Sports, Cambridge will have two certainties in the mile and three miles and Oxford two in the long jump and hammer throwing, G.S.Robertson's (Exeter) 110ft-odd being better than has been done at either University for some years. If Monypenny cannot get well enough to represent Cambridge in the quarter mile, then Ramsbotham (Exeter) might win it for Oxford. The other four events present a very open character, so the meeting of the two Universities at the Queen's Club on the day after the boat race, promises to be close and also to provide some very excellent performances."

The full record of the long jumping performance of C.B.Fry at the Oxford University Sports of 1892 has not been published before; however, the details

were kept by one of the judges who officiated on the occasion and are reproduced here.

Each jumper had four jumps. Fry as winner, being allowed a fifth in order that he might, if possible, surpass any previous effort. His first four jumps were as follows: 21ft 8" (6m60), 22ft 2" (6m76), 23ft 6.5" (7m17), and 21ft 10" (6m65). The extra jump was 22ft 3" (6m78). Thus, the average of the five jumps was 22ft 3.5" (6m79). The long jump competition at the Sports was remarkable aside from Fry's record. There were four competitors and of the twelve jumps that qualified for measurement, not one was under 21ft (6m40). Such a feat had never before occurred at a university meeting.

Of his own performance, Fry said:

"The best long jump from toe mark to heel I made was 24ft 2" but I took off 9 inches before the board. In those days, the taking off board in the long jump was fixed with the breadth of the board vertical and the upper edge flush with the track. There was a sheer drop into a little trench about 5 inches deep on the far side of the take off, so if one overstepped by a couple of inches, one took a severe header into the pit. Nowadays [1939] the whitewashed taking off board is twice as broad as it was, is flush with the surface on both sides so that the jumper, though his jump does not count if he oversteps the mark, has nothing to fear in the way of an accident. But even allowing for this, I think that the modern method of long jumping, called the hitch kick, is technically superior. The new method amounts to a run into the air, rather than a pure jump, such as one would use to clear a ditch if chased by a bull.

Really the most interesting thing about my sudden leap into notoriety at Oxford, was that before I discovered I could do it, thereby surprising myself, we had four other long jumpers who could clear, like me, about 21ft. One of them, W.J.Oakley, the famous international Association fullback, another was G.J.Mordaunt, the cricketer who played for Kent and the gentleman, and a third H.M.Taberer, who played cricket for Essex.

My housemaster (at Repton) Mr Forman, was the only coach I ever had in athletics and that on only one occasion. One afternoon he happened to be crossing the school paddock when I was practising the long jump on the rough turf into an elementary pit. He stopped for a few minutes, told me I did not jump high enough, took off his black mackintosh and made a heap of it between the take-off and the pit. The mackintosh frightened me into jumping much higher. That was the only

piece of coaching I ever remember receiving in athletics in the whole of my career. It is rather interesting that up at Oxford when I jumped over 23ft and did a world record, I used to be well over 5ft in the air in a human ball at the peak of my parabola. No doubt I saw a ghostly mackintosh and remembered Mr Foreman's vibrant voice."

Fry's world record performance was, however, not without a considerable degree of controversy. His jump of 23ft 6½" (7m17) equalled the world record set by the American Charles Reber and as a result occasioned such comment in the United States that *Harper's Weekly* sent their athletic editor Caspar Whitney to England with instructions to study English amateur sport.

Whitney was particularly interested in the circumstances of Fry's performance, and of the recent (July 16th 1894) match between Oxford and Yale, of which more later. Of the Fry controversy, Whitney had this to say:

"It would appear from these facts (a discussion of the mechanics of landing in the long jump) that all American records at running broad jump are really of several inches more value than English records of the same announced length, and that Reber's 23ft 6½", and Goff's 23ft 6", are actually several inches better than Fry's 23ft 6½".

Or the difference might be stated in another way. The English record, 23ft 6½", if measured by American rules, would have been about 23ft 1" or 23ft 2"; while the American record 23ft 6½", if measured by English rules, would be 23ft 11" or 24ft.

We shall await with interest English comment on these statements."

In reply, the London magazine *Pastime* commented:

"Mr Caspar W Whitney...has recently published some remarks on the measurement of our competitions. In the first place he draws attention to the using of a linen tape instead of a steel tape. But his more serious contention is that the measurements from the scratch-line are taken, not to the first disturbance in the soil, but to the 'final impression of the last heel'. Such a notion as this is quite incompatible with A.A.A. laws.

However true the last remark may be, there is no question that all good judges in long-jump performances are well aware that the measurement should be made to the nearest disturbance made in the earth by the foot, and the words "the nearest heel-

mark” are surely thus understood.”

A further reply to Whitney’s comments was published under the *nom de plume*, “Vanderdecken”, who observed:

“Speaking for myself, the result of my inquiries is simply that Mr Whitney is a bad observer. Neither in the case of C.B.Fry (whose claims to a record are ridiculed) nor anyone else is the final heel-mark taken, but the spot where the first falling away of earth is observed. This is not necessarily the spot where the first contact of the last heel with the earth has taken place. I have it from one of the judges who measured Fry’s record jump of 23ft 6½”, that the first mark made by the heel was one of the most clearly defined he had ever seen, and that the three judges were unanimous in assigning the position of the first break.”

4. 1894 - The first International Match

July 16th 1894 saw another Oxford athletic first, on this occasion the first international athletics meeting, with the visit of Yale to the Queen's Club. The match was held over nine events, the only change from the 'Varsity Match programme being the replacement of the three miles by the 880 yards. Oxford won the 100 yards, 440 yards, 880 yards, 1 mile and 120 yards hurdles and shared the high jump, thus winning by 5½ events to 3½, and on second places winning 5 to 4. As Whitney commented, "Oxford won the day on its merit." However, not all of Whitney's comments were favourable to the Oxonians; rather he continued in the same critical vein he had employed when discussing C.B.Fry's long jump world record:

"I was amused by the pistol of the Oxford starter, which is a muzzle-loading affair, rivalling the college buildings in antiquity, and when exploded sounded like a huge cannon fire-cracker. The men as a rule adopt the standing start. I think I observed only one who started from his hands and knees, and he did not get the advantage that is supposed to belong to that style of getting off the mark. The hurdling and hurdles are rather more primitive than ours, and driven into the ground. The same criticism applies to the average high-jumping form, the measuring of which but particularly of the broad jump, I consider faulty."

For all this, the Oxford-Yale match represented the beginning of the Oxford-Cambridge versus Ivy League Universities series. Croombe commented on the success of the first meeting:

"It is believed that the visitors enjoyed their stay in Oxford. At any rate, on a perfect summer night, after the team had dined in Magdalen with some athletic members of the Senior Common Room, the party went for a stroll in the deer park and fell on silence under the influence of that uniquely beautiful spot. At last one, looking up at the immemorial elms and assuming a drawl which he seldom used, said, "Waal! I s'pose I *could* be happier."

Walter Henderson (Trinity), winner of the 'Varsity Sports high jump in 1900, supplied the following notes on the first joint Oxford-Cambridge tour to the US, that took place in 1901:

"It was in August of this year that the O.U.A.C. and C.U.A.C. joined forces and crossed the Atlantic to do battle against M'Gill and Toronto Universities and against Harvard and Yale. I admit that I blessed the luck that had made me a member of the Oxford

team this year, for such visits, on the part of the English universities at least, resemble those of angles. How those early experiences crowd back upon the mind! The arrival at Boston, the delightful ebullience of the American press with its nippy little personal pars that pleasantly titillate the egoist in us all and its headlines that hit you in the eye, ere they send the (young) hand diving in the pocket for the coin that makes one master of all this hectic splendour: the sparkle and the glitter and the novelty suddenly presented to the eyes of an untravelled boy of twenty-one, who feels, with the secret glow of youth that he is the very deuce of a fellow.”

Henderson also commented on the differences between the British and American teams:

“Some lessons of the tour – perhaps the chief impression I carried away with me was one of appreciation of the thoroughness of the training of the Americans who indeed, if their press is to be relied upon as voicing their opinions, were surprised at what they considered our lack of method; and of the depression, sometimes, as I think, too extreme, which is apt to overtake them at a defeat. I append an extract of one of their papers: “There has been the best of feeling between the visitors and the visited. The Oxonians and the Cantabs are good sportsmen and good fellows. They don’t think the world is coming to an end when they are beaten.”

Many O.U.A.C. and C.U.A.C. cracks were present at the first Olympics of the modern era, held in Athens in 1896, for which Gilbert Robertson, the old Oxonian Blue was asked to write a Greek ode to celebrate the occasion. After 1904, the American matches were temporarily put on hold with Oxford and Cambridge declining negotiations for another international tussle until such time that true amateur status was recognised by those across the Atlantic.

The ‘Varsity Sports at the end of the nineteenth century

An account of the matches at the Queen’s Club during the early 1900s reports that they were:

“...decided annually at Queen’s on or about the day of the boat-race. The winners are called the first string and receive a full Blue; the second form the second string and receive a half-blue, the difference being that the first may wear a blue cap and jacket whereas the halves have only the blue trimming on their shirt and running breeches.

The team is generally selected about three weeks before the contest and once chosen, settle down to more serious training, usually going to the sea for the final ten days of preparation.”¹

The year 1898 saw O.U.A.C. and the ‘Varsity Match become part of the mainstream news with *The Sportsman’s Yearbook* of that year commenting:

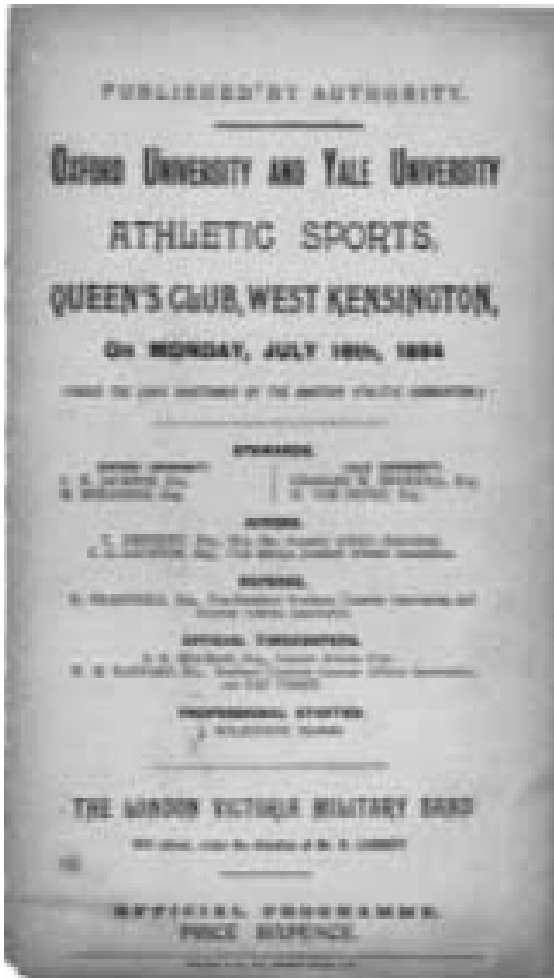
“Amongst general topics of interest may be mentioned that hardy annual, the programme of the Oxford and Cambridge sports. Once again, the hammer and weight were the subject of discussion and this time matters advanced somewhat farther than usual. The final decision has not yet been made public, but an animated discussion arose in the columns of the field, the general feeling of the correspondents being strongly in favour of the present programme. The most satisfactory feature of the debate was the general opinion that the spectators wishes should not be allowed to influence to any great extent, the action of the executive. The Varsity Sports at least, are not dependent on the gate for their existence and it would be the height of folly to make an unwise change for the benefit of a company of whom so large a proportion come to Queens Club with the intention of seeing a good deal besides athletics and in fact, seem to look at the contents themselves as something of a weariness.

That the half mile would be an attraction and a good race goes without saying, but perhaps the governing bodies would be wise to let will alone.”

The following poignant remarks from C.B.Fry, describe the magic conjured up by the annual ‘Varsity Match, which distinguishes it apart from other athletic competition:

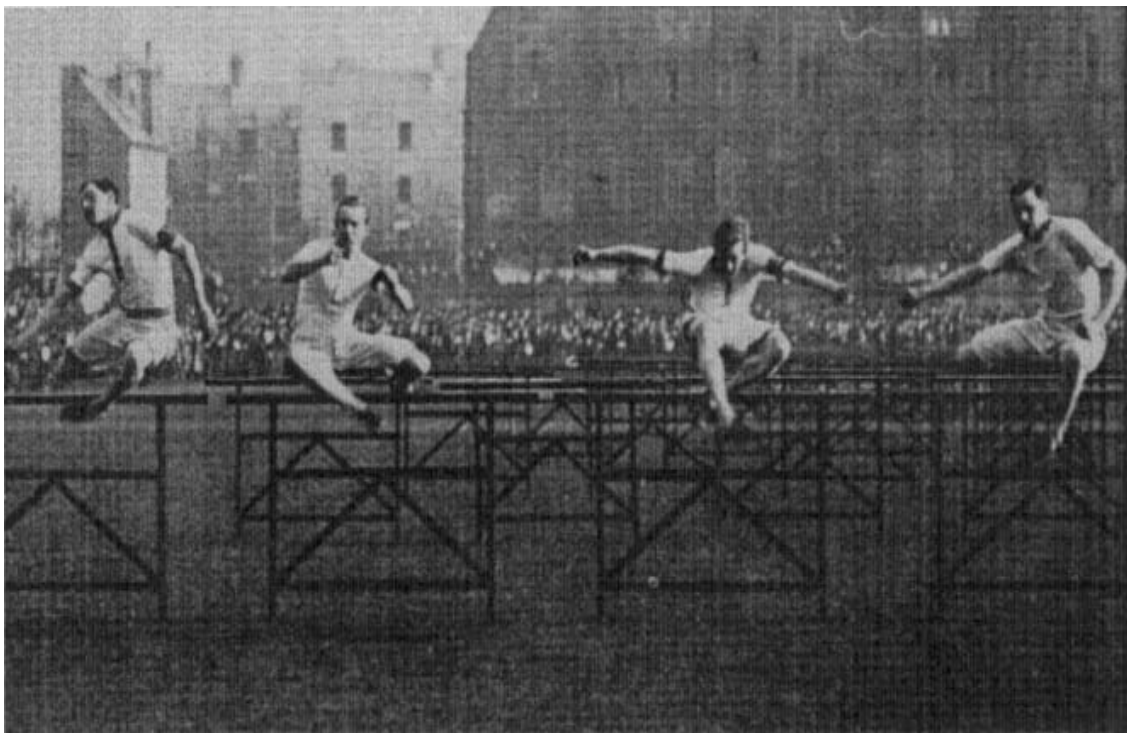
“Oxford and Cambridge athletics were about the only instance of team athletics. That was why so many Varsity athletes dropped the pursuit after going down. Athletic sports meetings, whether in London or the provinces, brought out the individual champions, but they were simply competitions on an individualistic basis. There was no social side and none of the comradeship which makes University track athletics so delightful.”

The same point is often made today.



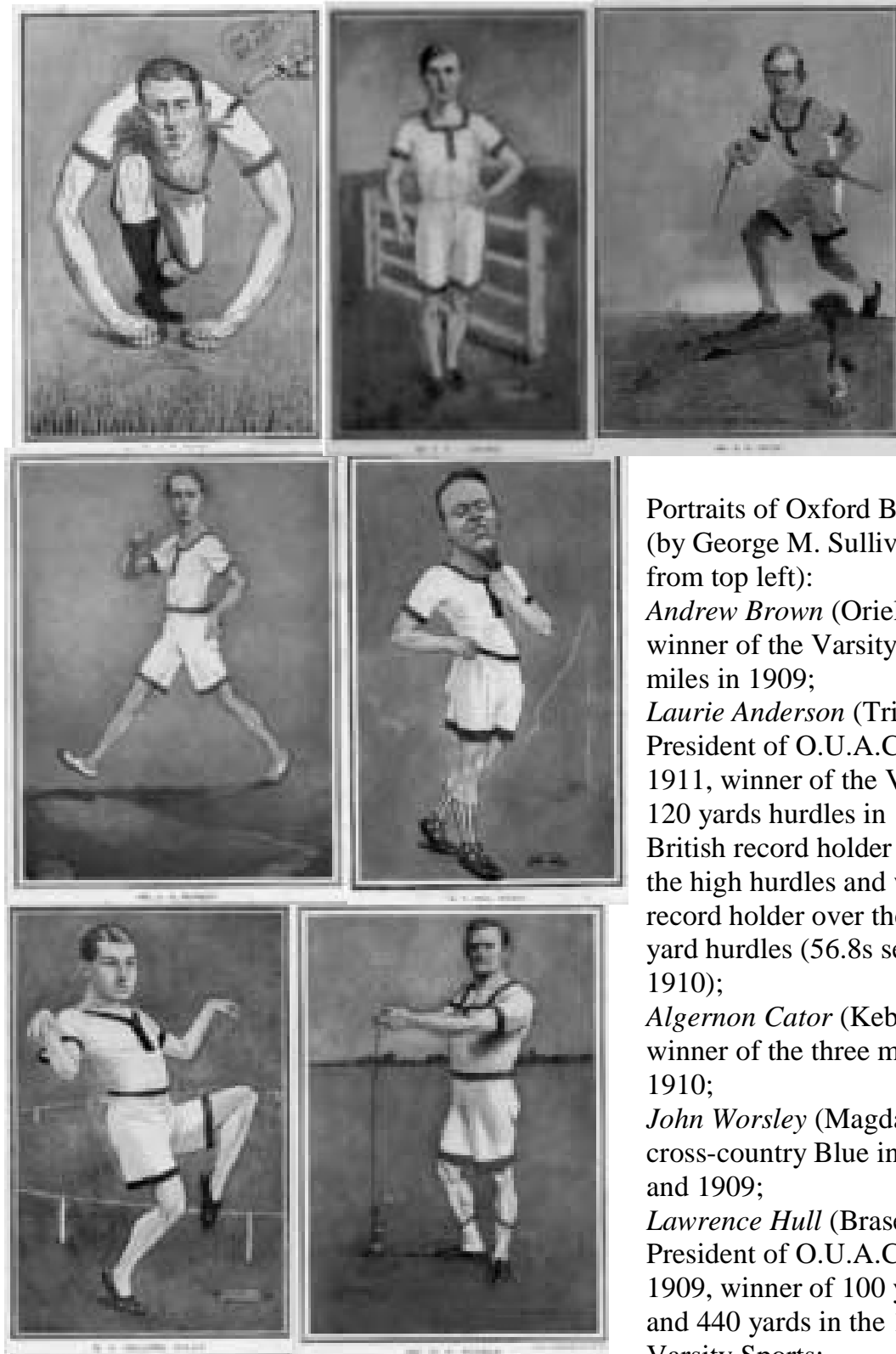
Left: The original programme from the world's first international match of Athletic Sports in 1894.

Below: The 120 yards high hurdles at the Varsity Match of 1893. The result was a dead heat between Henry Gedge and Edward Collis, both of Keble and Oxford.





The finish of the Quarter Mile in the 1901 'Varsity Sports, a win for Lionel Cornish (Lincoln) in 52.8 seconds. Sheffield Neave (Magdalen) was third.
Portrait by Allan Stewart.



Portraits of Oxford Blues
(by George M. Sullivan,
from top left):

Andrew Brown (Oriental),
winner of the Varsity three
miles in 1909;

Laurie Anderson (Trinity),
President of O.U.A.C. in
1911, winner of the Varsity
120 yards hurdles in 1909,
British record holder over
the high hurdles and world
record holder over the 440
yard hurdles (56.8s set in
1910);

Algernon Cator (Keble)
winner of the three miles in
1910;

John Worsley (Magdalen)
cross-country Blue in 1908
and 1909;

Lawrence Hull (Brasenose)
President of O.U.A.C. in
1909, winner of 100 yards
and 440 yards in the 1909
Varsity Sports;

Norman Hallows (Keble),

winner of the three miles from 1906–08 and double Olympic bronze medalist;
and *George Putnam* (Christ Church), winner of the hammer in the sports of 1910
and 1911, setting a ‘Varsity record in 1911 of 153ft 3”’, a record which stood until
1983 due to the event being removed from the ‘Varsity programme from 1922
until 1975.



Above: Paul Young (Oriental) wins the long jump and high jump double for the second year in succession at the 1907 'Varsity Sports. His high jump provides an excellent example of the then orthodox style, the "American Roll."

Below left: The Chavasse twins, Noel and Christopher (both Trinity). They went on to represent Great Britain in the London Olympics of 1908 (in the 400 metres). Christopher later became Bishop of Rochester. Noel was killed as a young man when serving as a medical officer in the First World War. He was the only British soldier to be awarded the Victoria Cross twice.

Below right: The Chavasse twins competing together in the 100 yards in the 'Varsity Sports of 1907. Noel, who is furthest right, and Ken Macleod (Pembroke, Cambridge, second from right) dead-heated in a time of 10.5s. Christopher won the 440 yards in 50.6s.



The athletics scene at Oxford and Cambridge in 1896 was described by *Bailey's Magazine of Sports and Pastimes*:

“Athletics are now in full swing at both Fenners and the Hertford College groundsⁱⁱ preparatory to the respective University Sports and the Inter-Varsity Sports, now definitely fixed for March 27th at the Queen's Club. Some fine performances have already been put on record and most of the Old Blues are evidently getting very fit. Gone alas are Messrs Scott, Fry, Robertson etc, yet a goodly few veterans remain on either side ready and eager for the fray.

J.M.Freemantle (Hertford) the Etonian crack is a decided acquisition to the Oxford ranks and bids fair to rival the distance exploits of such champions as Messrs F.T.Crossⁱⁱⁱ, W. Pollock-Hill etc, in the near future. Other promising newcomers are Messrs Garnier, Stevenson, Goddard and Railes.

Coming events cast their shadows before and as the result of close observation, we fancy the mile, three miles hurdles, high and long jumps will go to Oxford with the hundred yards an open question. Anyway, we plump for the dark Blues to win the odd event with a good deal of confidence.”

The outbreak of the Great War in August 1914 temporarily brought to an end the series of 'Varsity Matches at Queen's Club, with the running match score standing at Oxford 22, Cambridge 25, with 4 ties.

5. 1920-29 – Chariots of Fire

In March 1920, after a break of six years due to the Great War, the 'Varsity Match resumed at the Queen's Club, which now had a four-laps-to-the-mile track, although still not of a standard shape. The match resulted in a win for Oxford by 5½ events to 4½ with Bevil Rudd (Trinity and South Africa) winning the 880 yards, and dead heating in the 440 yards with Guy Butler (Trinity, Cambridge), who was later to become the IAAF official photographer.

In 1920, the tradition of the 'Varsity Match teams training at Brighton for the week before the match was resurrected. In later years, this practice had to be abandoned due to lack of funds.

No sooner were the 1920 Sports over than Bevil Rudd, along with Arnold Strode-Jackson organised a small joint Oxford and Cambridge team to visit America, and to compete in the Penn Relays. The combined team succeeded in winning the two mile (4 x 880 yards) in the world record time of 7:50.4ⁱ.

A somewhat unusual event occurred in Oxford shortly after their return from Philadelphia. The late Lord Birkenheadⁱⁱ, the then Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain, challenged one of the team to a post-prandial race around Tom Quad. The track was to be the carriage way, which is almost exactly 220 yards round. His Lordship volunteered to run four circuits before his opponent achieved eight. Needless to say, he won easily, hardly surprising as, even if his opponent had run a 4:30 mile, he would have had to average less than 7 mph to effect a dead heat.

As a result of discussions during the Penn Relays, another international match took place at Queen's Club on July 8th 1920, when Princeton defeated Oxford by 6 events to 4.

'Varsity Relays

1920 also saw the start of the 'Varsity Relays, with the Light Blues winning the first match by 4 events to 1. An annual Inter-Collegiate Relays Cup had already been established at Oxford (in 1910). Rather than carrying a baton, each college brought along a small flag, presumably of their colours, which was passed from runner to runner.

Rex Salisbury-Woods (Downing), the Cambridge Blue and Great Britain International in the shot, had this to say of the 'Varsity Relays in his biography, *Cambridge Doctor*:

“These relays, held in alternate years at Oxford or Cambridge, have continued ever since, although the series was prohibited for good after the riotous return of an Oxford team in the 1920s. For some reason I have never discovered, Oxford men seem to take

more readily to destruction in their celebrations and on this occasion, they smashed the glass window of a dining car before leaving Cambridge and on the way to Oxford, converted two compartments into one saloon, and nearly brained the Bletchley station-master with a beer bottle.

Having dealt with individual offenders, the Oxford proctors banned the Relays. This seemed a pity and most unfair to Cambridge men, so when the dust had settled, I persuaded my opposite number in the O.U.A.C., T.D.Weldon, the Senior Tutor of Magdalen, to intercede and this he did so successfully that the ban was lifted.”

Involved with Rex Salisbury-Woods in the setting up of the ‘Varsity Relays were amongst others, Philip Noel-Baker (King’s) of Cambridge and Bevil Rudd, the South African Rhodes Scholar. The resulting first meeting took place at Fenner’s on December 3rd 1920. The Rt. Hon. William Milligan (University), writing in the early days of the Achilles Club in *Modern Athletics*, says:

“The preliminary organisation seems to have been difficult as I have before me a telegram from the Secretary of C.U.A.C. saying, “having sleepless nights while awaiting your decision December 3rd or cancel every moment precious.”

I note for comparison with present day figures, the times and the events at this inaugural meeting:

4 x 220yards	1:32
4 x 440yards	3:28
4 x 880yards	8:21.4
4 x 1mile	18:27.6
4 x 120yards hurdles (shuttle)	1:07.4

The public’s first reaction to relay racing was rather cautious but time has shown that such meetings can and often do provide much excellent and exciting racing. From the competitors’ point of view, relay racing in a December fog has its disadvantages, but the feeling is very nice when it’s all over.”

In 1926, a 4 x 100 yards shuttle relay and a 4 x 200 yards low hurdles (also run as a shuttle race on a 220 yard straight) were added to the programme. The following year, the 4 x 100 yards shuttle was converted to a continuous 4 x 100 yard relay, until 1948, when it was replaced by the standard 4 x 110 yard relay.

In 1970, the relays came into line with international athletics by being run over metric distances. The 4 x 1 mile was replaced by the 4 x 1600 meters, presumably

as a simple expedient. This somewhat odd relay was, however, replaced in 1989 by the 4 x 1500m.

With the advent of ladies' athletics in 1975, the original relays chosen were the 4 x 100m, 3 x 800m and a medley relay with the stages being 200, 600, 1200 and 400 metres respectively. The current six ladies' relays have only been in operation together since 1999.

Salisbury-Woods continued to discuss the 'Varsity Match saying:

“An important change in the Sports programme after 1921, was the introduction of the pole vault and the 220 yards hurdles and the removal at Oxford's request, of the hammer, just when M.C.Nokes of Oxford had beaten the British record with a throw of 170ft. There was also talk about changing the scoring but the method continued to be by first places until 1938 when the points system was introduced. By this, the first three places all counted. We had tried it in our combined meets with Harvard-Yale and Princeton-Cornell because the Americans had already adopted it, but our conversion was slow. We had grown up in the tradition of using our second string simply as a pace maker, who need not necessarily finish, once he had done his job of nursing his first string to win. However, it is now (1962) generally agreed that the points afford the fairest estimate of a team's total strength.”

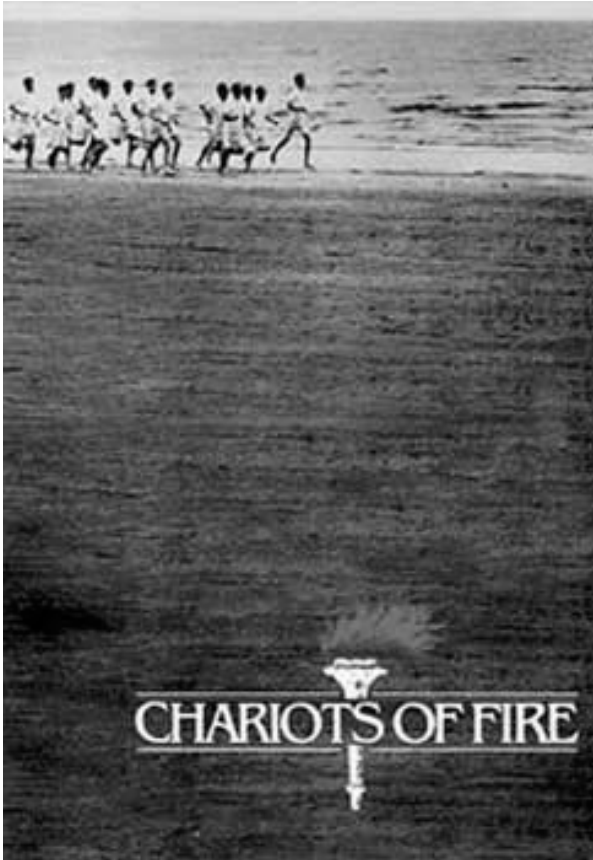
Despite the removal of the hammer from the 'Varsity programme, Malcolm Nokes (Magdalen), the last winner of the 'Varsity event in 1921, went on to win the bronze medal for Great Britain at the Paris Olympics in 1924. For the 1923 match the pole vault was added to the programme.

1923 saw O.U.A.C. embark on a tour of South Africa where the club competed against the University of South Africa, both jointly and also severally. In an effort to minimize the inevitable financial loss of the trip, the team sought permission to challenge South Africa and a magnificent meeting at Johannesburg set the guarantors' minds at rest. The meeting was held at an altitude of approximately 6,000ft above sea-level, greatly affecting the performance of the visiting team.

Whilst performances in events up to and including the 440 yards improved, those competing in the longer events suffered.

Bevil Rudd

Bevil Rudd went up to Oxford in 1913. As a freshman, he won a Blue in the quarter-mile, equalling the O.U.A.C. record in the process, before serving in the war. On returning to Oxford, he was President of O.U.A.C. for two years



Left: The film, *Chariots of Fire*, which gave a vivid depiction of Oxbridge athletics in the 1920s.

Below: Oxford athletes at the pre-
‘Varsity training trip to Preston Park,
Brighton, in 1925.



(1920-21) and captained the Oxford and Cambridge relay team that broke the world record for the 4 x 880 yards relay in America in 1920. At the VIIth Olympiad in Antwerp in 1920, he won the gold medal in the 400m, silver in the 4 x 400m relay and the bronze in the 800m.

In the introduction to *Athletics*, he commented that he:

“...belonged primarily to the pre-war era, when training at the universities was essentially casual, and competition very occasional. We conformed to a traditional training schedule, which while it kept us fit, in no way tested our individual abilities or polished our style. A faulty action was regarded as a fascinating idiosyncrasy and misplaced energy regarded as a sign of guts. Elongated striding was cultivated in the belief that the fewer strides taken in a race, the less energy was expended and there was certainly more vigour than finesse to all our field event activities. Senior members were very helpful but as a rule, they too lacked sound experience. We did however, have that grand old man, C.N.Jackson, to curb our excesses and quicken our resolution and I had the good fortune to be at Oxford when his nephew Arnold Strode-Jackson was president of the O.U.A.C.. He had pioneered the first Oxford and Cambridge Olympic victory by winning the 1500m at Stockholm.

The American Rhodes Scholars were more patient and thorough than we were. But when they failed to do as well in an English match as they had done in an American June, instead of ascribing their comparative failure to the harsh change of climate, we put it down to a too fussy preparation. And the sweat suits they wore when warming up on cold days were at once a sign of bodily delicacy and aesthetic indelicacy.

All the same we were, I think, more constructive than an earlier generation of athletes. After the war we became much more questioning and experimental. All our energies were concentrated on the Oxford and Cambridge Sports. Nobody was particularly encouraged to enter for the A.A.A. Championship, or other big meetings and very few did. Hardly anyone continued his athletic career after he had gone down.”

Rudd later paid fulsome tribute to his years at Oxford during which time he was able to train at optimal times, unburdened by the demands of having to earn a living, a privilege denied to many of his international competitors.



Left: A sketch of Bevil Rudd demonstrating “a perfect quarter mile action.”

Below: George Trowbridge (Trinity) winning the 120 yard high hurdles in the 1921 ‘Varsity Sports (portrait by E.G.Oakdale).



The 'Varsity Sports in the 1920s

The 'Varsity Match was held at the Queen's Club until the track yielded to tennis courts in 1928, with Oxford winning in 1923 and 1925 and there being exciting ties in 1921 and 1924. During this period, the Oxford star was Arthur Porritt (Magdalen & New Zealand), who in 1924 won the bronze medal in the 100m at the Paris Olympic Games, two places behind the legendary Harold Abrahams (Gonville and Caius), who was immortalized in Hugh Hudson's film, *Chariots of Fire*.

Porritt equalled the gold medallist's 'Varsity Match record for the 100 yards in 1925 with a time of 10.0s, reducing this to 9.9s the following year. He went on to become the Governor of New Zealand and Surgeon General to the Queen.

Other Oxford athletes at the 1924 Games included William Stevenson (Balliol and USA), who won a gold medal in the 1600m relay, having won the 440 yards in the 1925 'Varsity match; Don Johnson (Balliol and Canada), the winner of the 440 yards in the 1924 'Varsity Match who finished fourth in both the 400m and the 1600m relay; Bayes Norton (University and USA), who finished fifth in the 200m; Evelyn Montague (Magdalen), who had won the Varsity three miles in 1920 and 1924, who finished sixth in the 3000m steeplechase; and Chris Mackintosh (University), the 'Varsity high jump winner in 1923 and 1924.

By the time of leaving Queen's Club in 1928 the series score was Oxford 25, Cambridge 29 with 6 ties.

6. 1929-39 – “Come on Jack!”

1930 saw the Golden Jubilee of the A.A.A., an organisation whose existence owed a great deal to the influence of O.U.A.C.. To celebrate this anniversary, the A.A.A. published *Fifty Years of Progress: 1880-1930* which in an overview of athletics in the schools and universities, had the following to say of O.U.A.C. and C.U.A.C.:

“The foundation of the Achilles Club marked the re-entry of Oxford and Cambridge athletes in large numbers into open competition, both at home and abroad and at the two universities, many innovations. The inter-college system of sports meeting, based on a combination of league and knock-out bases at Oxford, was revitalised and Inter-College relay races were developed. The Oxford-Cambridge relay races were founded in 1920 and are held every December at each university in turn and the Inter-Varsity Sports programme was revised. The ten events which had stood since 1903, namely 100, 440, 880, mile, 3 miles, high hurdles, high and long jumps, weight and hammer, were changing, the hammer going out and the pole jump and 220yards low hurdles coming in. And perhaps as a sequel to the transference of Anglo-American matches from Queen’s Club to Stamford Bridge, the Varsity Sports also moved there in 1929.”

With the demise of the Queen’s Club as an athletics venue, the ‘Varsity Match moved to Stamford Bridgeⁱ for the years 1929-31, with Cambridge winning all of them. During this period only the mile through Jerry Cornes (Corpus Christi), John Pumprey (New College)ⁱⁱ in the three miles, and the high jump through Colin Gordon (Christ Church) provided any tangible Dark Blue success. When the sports left Stamford Bridge the running match score stood at Oxford 25, Cambridge 32 with 6 ties.

The O.U.A.C. Minute Book of this time reveals that the ‘Varsity Sports of 1931 were the first in which the Oxford athletes were allowed to compete in vests. The president, Henry Townsend (Brasenose) commented as follows:

“After much trouble, we at last on the morning of the Sports got the A.A.A. to grant us permission to wear sleeveless vests. The new vests had a cold inauguration, which was not good for them. But they are more healthy, more comfortable and look better; although one rather missed the blue trimmed sleeves.”

In 1932, the ‘Varsity Match moved to its seventh venue, this time to Britain’s premier athletics stadium - albeit shared with greyhound racing - the White City, home of the 1908 Olympics. There, Cambridge recorded their seventh successive

victory by 6 events to 5.

Following the 'Varsity Sports, Oxford entered a team for the University Athletic Union Championshipsⁱⁱⁱ for the first time. The result was rather conclusive. President Cornes' report of the match reads as follows:

“For the first time this year, Oxford and Cambridge entered for the U.A.U Championships at Motspur Park, on May 20th and 21st. These Championships, which have been held since 1919, now number among their contestants, representatives of nearly all the provincial universities and those of Scotland, Wales and Ireland, as well as those of London University. Oxford did not field a fully representative team, owing to the exigencies of schools etc. Yet we did the other universities the honour of sending as strong a team as we could under the circumstances, with the result that we won rather easily. Next year it will obviously be advisable to use the meeting more as a dress rehearsal for the young runners who may be called up to compete against Cambridge in 1934.”

The final team result saw Oxford win with 91 points, London second with 52.5 points and Cambridge third with 50 points.

Tom Hampson

The 1932 Olympic Games at Los Angeles brought success for O.U.A.C., particularly in the middle distances. Tom Hampson (St. Catherine's Society) won gold in the 800m in a new world record, the fourth consecutive win in the event for Britain. Hampson also won a silver medal with the relay team.

O.U.A.C. had three contestants in the 1500m final: the young Jack Lovelock (Exeter), representing New Zealand, finished seventh; Pen Hallowell (Balliol) finished a place ahead for the USA; and Jerry Cornes (Corpus Christi), having led for most of the race, eventually took silver after being overhauled in a dramatic finish by the Italian, Luigi Beccali. The finishing positions of the friends Lovelock and Cornes were almost reversed at the Berlin Olympics, four year later. Roger Harper, later to be responsible for the instigation and development of the A.A.A's coaching scheme, competed for Great Britain in the 110m hurdles.

Tom Hampson had only run as a second string in the 'Varsity Sports of 1929, it being his last year at the university. He did, however, show phenomenal improvement during the following summer, winning the first of three consecutive national titles over 800m, his first establishing a new national record of 1:53.2.

He consolidated his improvement with an unbeaten string of races when representing Oxford and Cambridge on the American Tour. In the summer of

1932, after recording his third A.A.A. win, Hampson went on to win the Empire Games title in Canada in a time of 1:52.4, a personal best and a Canadian all-comers record. His Olympic victory in Los Angeles established an astonishing new world record of 1:49.8, with his becoming the first man ever to break the 1:50 barrier.

Jack Lovelock

In 1933, Oxford succeeded in breaking the Cambridge run of 'Varsity wins by taking 8 events to Cambridge's 3. For this success Oxford was in debt to overseas students, in particular Charles Stanwood (University and USA) for winning both the 120 yards hurdles, 220 yards hurdles and the high jump. His colleague, Pen Hallowell, won the 880 yards and Jack Lovelock won the mile for the second year in succession.

1934 saw Oxford win again, this time by 7 events to 4. As with 1933, Stanwood completed a triple victory in the hurdles and high jump, with Hallowell setting a new match record for the 880 yards of 1:54.2, and Jack Lovelock winning the mile for the third consecutive time.

The next three 'Varsity Matches saw wins for Cambridge, in 1935 by 7 events to 4; in 1936 by 8 events to 3; and in 1937, overwhelmingly, by 9 events to 2. Despite these reverses, Oxford still produced outstanding athletes, in particular Sandy Duncan (New College), who won the 100 yards in 1935, and Alan Pennington (Hertford), the winner of the same event in 1936.

The 1936 Berlin Olympic Games saw Jack Lovelock win the gold medal in the 1500m whilst wearing the all-black of New Zealand with Jerry Cornes finishing sixth. Alan Pennington competed in the 100m and 200m and the sprint relay for Great Britain, whilst Ashleigh Pilbrow (Queen's), the winner of the 'Varsity 120 yards hurdles in 1935, competed in the 110m hurdles. Helge Sivertsen (Wadham), who was to win the shot for Oxford in the 1939 'Varsity Match, competed for Norway in the Discus.

Frederick Webster commented on the arrival of Jack Lovelock at Oxford, saying:

“Cornes was honorary secretary of O.U.A.C. and had already won the Inter-Varsity mile twice when Jack Lovelock of Otago University, New Zealand went up to Oxford in the fall of 1931 as a Rhodes. Lovelock was already an athlete and a boxer of some note. On October 30th, 1931, he signalled his arrival at Oxford by winning the freshmen's mile at the Iffley Rd track by 60 yards in 4:37.6. On November 17th, there was a significant happening with Jerry Cornes returning 4:22 for a mile, chipping 0.6 seconds of A.N.S Jackson's track record and in so doing, defeating Lovelock by 12 yards. A fortnight later, Lovelock, for the first time in England, gave evidence of that judgement and

cool courage which were to carry him to the highest honours on the running track before he hung up his spikes for the last time. The 4 x 1 mile relay was likely to be a close thing that year, for both Cornes and F.T.Horan, the honorary secretary of C.U.A.C., were great middle distance runners and both were well supported. In the race, Lovelock, who had been given a lead of 10 yards, was passed with 400 yards still to go but running with good judgement, he kept his head and his place to send off Cornes with a 15 yard advantage over Horan in the final mile.”

Indeed, that fast, efficient mile, ending with a flashing burst of speed, made spectators open their eyes; Oxford had obviously acquired a miler of rare potential, and the athletic club now boasted two exceptional ones.

In the summer of 1932, Lovelock suddenly sprang into world fame, the occasion being the annual match between O.U.A.C. and the A.A.A.. It proved an opportunity for him to show the New Zealand authorities that he was worth a place in their Olympic team at Los Angeles. Webster continued:

“In the Inter-Varsity mile, Cornes and Lovelock tied in 4:22.4, not caused really to fight out the issue, as the Cambridge men had provided little in the way of real opposition. In the half mile, Cornes’ 1:54 beat his opposition Horan, the Cambridge president, who only managed 1:57.8. Cornes’ mind seemed then to be turning definitely to the half-mile distance. It was no surprise therefore, although it marked perhaps the turning point in Lovelock’s own career, to learn that in the match between the A.A.A. and O.U.A.C. at Iffley Rd on May 26th, 1932, Cornes was to run against Tom Hampson, A.A.A. half-mile champion (in the 880 yards) whilst Lovelock would be left to take on the mile alone. In the event, Cornes was beaten by 5 yards, Hampson winning in 1:54.4. That equalled the track record set up in 1886 by that great Oxford runner, F.J.K.Cross who witnessed his record being matched and was among the first to congratulate Hampson.

Lovelock, emerging from the shadow of Jerry Cornes and with the honour of Oxford at stake, made up his mind, it seems, to stage a make-or-break mile performance. Before the race, he asked his second string, M.J.Alberry, to take him along from the very flash of the starter’s pistol at the fastest pace he could produce.

This Alberry did, running the initial quarter in 57 seconds and with Lovelock audibly urging him to go faster, he stuck it out until the 600 yards mark was passed. Then the New Zealander took over, to complete the half mile in 2:02.

Continuing with great élan, he dropped the two experienced A.A.A. runners, Winfield and Harris and passed the three quarter mile mark in 3:13. Bill Thomas, the O.U.A.C. coach who was destined to play so big a part in Lovelock's athletic life, held a stop watch in trembling hands and with only 100 yards to be covered, was telling the pressmen that four minutes had not yet been clocked. The official time keepers could not believe their own Greenwich-tested stopwatches but Lovelock burst through the tape, 50 yards ahead of A.Harris, who had won the 1931 Army title in 4:24. Lovelock's time was 4:12 and he had in his first year at Oxford, broken Cornes' Iffley Road track record of 4:17 made two years earlier and the British (all-comers) Record of 4:13.4, achieved by R.H.Thomas, of the RAF, in 1931.

What Lovelock would have done with opposition from "Taffy" Thomas, Jerry Cornes and Jules Ladoumégue, the French world record holder, one hesitates to think; but I still believe that the inspired Lovelock might have produced that afternoon, the so-far-mythical mile in four minutes. He ran like a man possessed and wasted much breath urging Alberry to run faster after that first lap.

Old "Sam" (S.A.) Mussabini was amazed, but said to me sadly, "If he could only have run to one of my even-timed lap schedules, he might have got the four-minute mile.

Lovelock's lap times being:

First lap	57s
Second lap	65s
Third lap	71s
Fourth lap	59s
Total	4:12

the difference between Lovelock's fastest and slowest laps being 14 seconds. So much for even pace running!"

After this, Lovelock was one of the most fancied runners in the Olympic 1500m. He did not win it; he was not even in contention. This failure became the turning point in his career. This race convinced him that he was physically capable of only one great race each season. When the respective merits of Sydney Wooderson and Lovelock were discussed, it was often pointed out that when the two had met, Wooderson had usually won. What was not realised was that Lovelock, having set his sights on one race, treated all others, even Championship races, as part of his training for it. He never allowed rivalry to carry him away into running faster than he had planned. He was not interested in records as such. From 1932 onwards he ignored all temptations to temporary fame and concentrated on the Olympic

1500m of 1936.

In the autumn of 1932, he ran cross-country and in the Inter-'Varsity race at Horton Kirby that December, he and the Oxford University Hare and Hounds' captain, Cyril Mabey (St. Edmund Hall), finished equal first in record time. He never ran long distance again until the summer of 1936, when he competed in a few two and three mile races, and ran the fastest times by any British runner since Alf Shrubbs, himself coach to O.U.A.C. in the 1920s.

Lovelock's greatest race of 1933 came in the United States. He went as a member of the Oxford-Cambridge team, and there faced Bill Bonthron of Princeton, a great miler who had held his own with Glenn Cunningham, at that time, perhaps the greatest miler of them all. Both finished under the previous world record of 4:09.2, Lovelock beating Bonthron to finish in 4:07.6 to his rival's 4:08.7. An entry from Lovelock's diary describes the occasion:

“That is the sort of race which one really enjoys - to feel at one's peak on the day when it is necessary, and to be able to produce the pace at the very finish. It gives a thrill which compensates for months of training and toiling. But it is the sort of race that one wants only about once a season.”

In 1935, Lovelock met and beat Cunningham in the “mile of the century” in America. When asked in early 1936 whom he feared most in the Olympics, Lovelock replied Wooderson in view of his shortened stride in his finishing sprint. In the event, Wooderson did not make the Olympic final having broken down in his heat with an injured foot.

The pinnacle of Lovelock's career, his winning of the gold medal at the Berlin Olympic Games on August 6th 1936 in a world record time of 3:47.8, was described by Harold Abrahams, winner of the gold medal in the 100m at the 1924 Paris Olympics and a mentor of Lovelock's, as follows:

“Lovelock won by stupendous running combined with brilliant generalship. No matter where he placed in the race, he seemed to be controlling it. His genius and personality were apparent throughout. He gave the impression of supreme and unbeatable confidence.”

Frederick Webster believed that:

“The confidence came as a result of the careful preparation he had undergone with Bill Thomas, the O.U.A.C. coach who looked after him and the knowledge they acquired beforehand of the ultimate sprint-finishing ability of his potential competitors.”

Fortuitously, Lovelock and Cornes had met in the weakest semi-final in Berlin,

and qualified for the final in times some five or six seconds slower than the others. At the bell in the final, the whole field was still together with Cunningham leading, then Ny (Sweden), then Lovelock. By this time, Lovelock was confident of victory, and contemplated breaking away from the field. However, his self-will re-asserted itself and he decided that if he waited for another hundred yards, he could make absolutely sure of winning. So 300 yards from home, and 100 yards before anybody expected it, he jumped away from the field. By the time Cunningham and the rest had recovered from the shock, Lovelock was ten yards ahead. Lovelock commented in his diary:

“Even Cunningham, strong though he is, could not live up to the strain of setting such a pace, combined with the mental worry of having a lightly stepping black shadow right on his shoulder, locking strides with him, almost breathing in his ear - for the trick of shadowing an opponent within sight and hearing is one of the more maddening and distracting forms of tactics that one can use in any race.”

Cunningham and Beccali then settled down to chase him but they were too late and Lovelock had judged his own powers and theirs exactly. They chased him to the end with Cunningham making up a couple of yards; however Lovelock won with Cornes in sixth place, although running faster than he had when winning silver in 1932. Coverage of the race was provided by the B.B.C. with Lovelock’s friend, Harold Abrahams, responsible for the now notorious, excited commentary. As Lovelock burst clear of the field, Abrahams completely lost his poise:

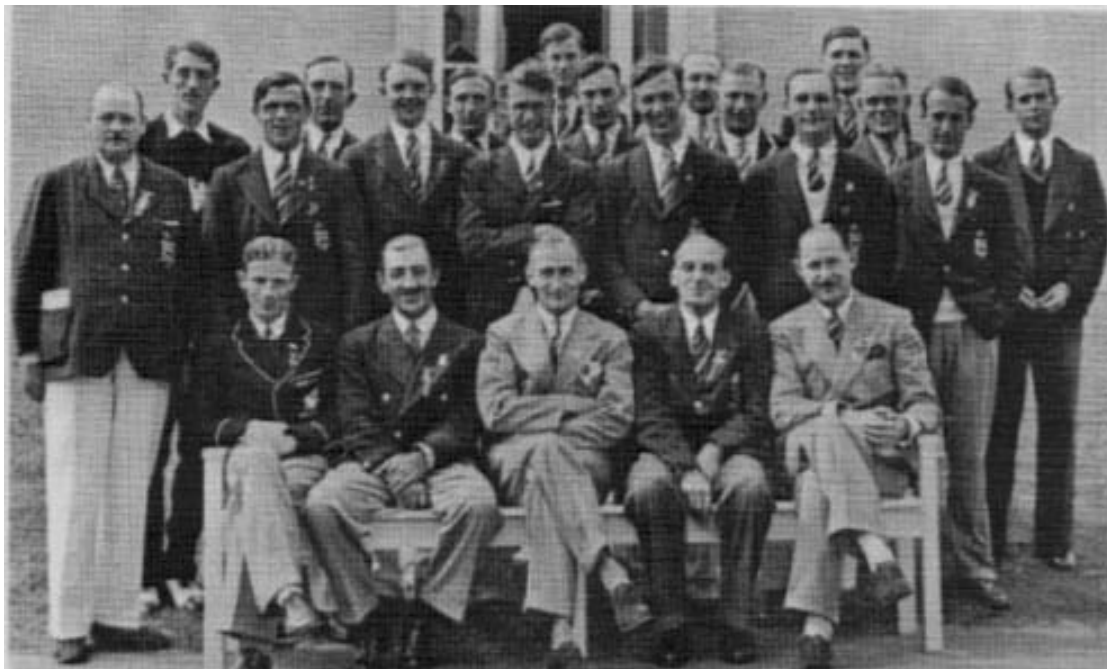
“Lovelock leads! Lovelock! Lovelock! Cunningham second, Beccali third. Come on, Jack! A hundred yards to go! Come on, Jack! My god, he’s done it. Jack, come on! Lovelock wins. Five yards, six yards, he wins. He’s won. Hooray!”^{iv}

The impact of Lovelock’s near-perfect race is best described by Roger Robinson^v with the following remarks:

“It was the first time an Olympic 1500m winner had broken the world record since 1904 (only Herb Elliott of Australia has done it since, in 1960). It put the four-minute mile realistically within sight. Yet the race was better than its statistics, widely acclaimed as the greatest ever, and on film it still sustains that kind of praise. The B.B.C. commentator, Harold Abrahams, broke every broadcasting rule and writers searched for phrases to describe Lovelock’s genius, his alluring mix of frail grace with the sudden destructive strike. Obituaries and all subsequent accounts have sought to define the artistic quality of Lovelock’s running, meticulously crafted yet also inspired. His almost mythic status was confirmed at Berlin.”



Hampson breaking the tape in the Olympic final.



Members of the Achilles Club at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Top Row (l-to-r): A.G.Pilbrow, V.E.Morgan, M.Y.Ffrench-Williams.

Second Row: I.S.Ivanovic, W.R.Milligan, A.Pennington, J.F.Cornes, M.Bourne, E.A.Montague, J.C.Horsfall.

First Row: E.A.Hunter, K.S.Duncan, R.K.I.Kennedy, A.G.K.Brown, F.R.Webster, J.St.L.Thornton, P.D.Ward; Sitting: J.E.Lovelock, B.G.D.Rudd, Lord Burghley, H.M.Abrahams, A.E.Porritt.



The “...unfortunate photo of smugness versus despair..,” as described by McNeish.

Bonthrom makes a last-gasp attempt to catch Lovelock in the finishing straight but Lovelock already has the race won.



Lovelock immediately after his Olympic win.



The visiting Harvard-Yale team of 1931 training at Iffley Road.

'Varsity Matches just before the Second World War

For the 1938 match, the scoring system was changed from events to points, with 5 for first place, 3 for second, and 1 for third, something that only came about after much heated debate. The match programme was also altered to make way for the introduction of the discus and javelin.

The 1938 match was won by Oxford by three points, whilst in the 1939 match, the Dark Blues won easily by 35 points. Alan Pennington having won the 100 yards in 1938 moved up to the 440 yards in 1939, which he also succeeded in winning. In 1939, Thomas Lockton (Hertford) set a new match record in winning the 120 yards hurdles in a time of 14.9s.

With the Second World War intervening, there was no official 'Varsity Match for seven years. The running match score stood at Oxford 29, Cambridge 36 with 6 ties. However, a series of wartime matches were held at Oxford and Cambridge, although they remain unofficial and do not count in the overall series score.^{vi}

7. 1946-58 - 3 minutes, 59.4 seconds

The 'Varsity Sports were revived in 1946, following the series of wartime matches. The one change to the programme was the omission of the pole vault, although it returned in 1947 and the 220 yards was added. As in the immediate pre-war period, the 'Varsity Match returned to the White City and continued to attract sizeable crowds. Both 1946 and 1947 matches were won by Cambridge, extending their lead in the series to nine, their greatest so far.

Roger Bannister

Norris McWhirter (Trinity) described the situation leading up to Roger Bannister's first appearance in the 'Varsity Match as follows:

“The winter had been so severe that the old running track at Iffley Rd (at that stage, three laps to the mile and run clockwise) remained snowbound throughout the entire term and no O.U.A.C. trials were possible. However one aspirant athlete from Exeter College was selected as third-string for the mile as a reward for his indefatigable work day after day, shovelling snow. Not yet eighteen, he must have been about the youngest undergraduate in the whole university. At the Oxford v Cambridge sports at White City, this unknown, rather loping third-string for Oxford came from the back, passing the other five competitors and so to win by 20 yards on the porridge-like, thawing track. His name was Roger Gilbert Bannister. The old groundsman at Iffley Road had confided in him three months before, “I’m afraid you’ll never be any good sir. You just haven’t got the strength or build for it!”

Roger Bannister was a natural runner and an extremely clever man. The combination of these two attributes produced a brilliant athlete who hid his determination to become the best in the world, behind a Corinthian exterior. It gave him the appearance of a dilettante, who trained little and raced rarely to the irritation of the press who chastised him for failing to appear regularly, for training in secret, for avoiding his main rivals and for not having a coach.

The truth was very different. There were many crucial components which moulded Bannister's short career. Among them, were his natural talent and the inspiration of seeing Sydney Wooderson defeat Arne Anderson at the White City in 1945. These led him to take up running instead of rowing when he went up to Oxford at the age of 17-and-a-half, in the autumn of 1946.

He showed some promise when finishing second in the freshman's mile to Peter Curry (Oriel), who was to run in the 1948 Olympic steeplechase, but not enough to be selected for the Inter-'Varsity Relays. Sandy Duncan who was then coaching

the team, told Bannister that if he stopped bouncing, he would knock 20 seconds off. Wearing spikes for the first time had made Bannister leap like a kangaroo.

It was in that 1947 match at the White City in the cold of March, that the lanky young Bannister discovered the wonderful feeling of wanting to overtake the whole field and promptly, he did so to win in 4:30.8, aged still only 17. These were the days when one of the leading Oxford runners could not last the nine laps of a three mile race without a cigarette and had a friend standing by with one ready for a quick drag before the bell¹. Bannister improved to 4:24.6 when winning for the University again against the A.A.A. and during an O.U.A.C. tour of Germany, he ran 4:13.0 for the 1500m.

In the Olympic year of 1948, he won at the University Sports in 4:25.5 and in the match against Cambridge and the U.A.U. Championships, won in the identical times of 4:23.4. He moved out into the bigger world of domestic racing as an Olympic “possible” and finished a strong fourth in 4:18.7 at the Kinnaird. He then improved to 4:17.2 when fifth at the A.A.A. Championships.

Contrary to contemporary reports, he had gone all-out to win a place at the 1948 Olympic Games, but missed out for the third spot at 1500m. Instead he was assistant to Evan Hunter (Christ Church), the commandant of the British team at the Games and this experience changed his outlook. In his own words, Bannister discovered that sport had a unity, “...with a beauty that is evident in man’s highest endeavour.”

In 1949, he developed that famous finishing burst, which was to become his trademark. It was an awesome sight as he strode away from strong fields with final laps that were to entirely change the way that the mile race was run. The year started promisingly with 4:18.0 in the University Sports and a ‘Varsity record of 4:16.2 (63.6, 65.2, 64.0, 63.4), when leading all the way against Cambridge. He then went on his visit to the USA, running a personal best 4:11.9 against Princeton and Cornell, followed a few days later with 4:11.1 against Harvard and Yale, both with strong sub-60s last lap.

As a medical student, he was at Exeter for four years. In his last year, he began by winning the University Sports mile in a match record of 4:24.6 and then setting a record of 4:14.8 (leading all the way in 62.4, 2:09.6 and 3:16.6) for his fourth win against Cambridge. He ran a 57.5 last lap for 4:13.0 against Princeton and Cornell at the White City and then at 1500m, clocked 4:02.9 on an Achilles tour to Greece and 3:58.0 in England. It was at this time that in an edition of *Athletics Weekly*, Jimmy Green tipped Bannister to become the first sub-four minute miler.

The 1947 match was not only noteworthy for the arrival of Bannister, but also for Roger Barkway (Exeter) who won the 220 yards low hurdles, and in 1948 the 120 yards hurdles. Barkway, who demonstrated the potential to become one of Britain’s all-time great hurdlers, was sadly to meet an untimely death in a car accident before his undoubted potential could be fulfilled.

McWhirter continued his description of this period saying:

“The summer of 1947 was a particularly fine one. It was an era when the great majority of undergraduates expected to spend afternoons participating in one sport or another. It was a far cry from many of the present day [1976] students, who when they feel the urge to take exercise, apparently lie down until the dreaded feeling passes off. In the Oxford University Centipedes Club sports, no fewer than twenty-six entrants turned up to contest the 100 yards heats.

Four days later, I had my first meeting with Macdonald-Bailey from Trinidad, the British 100 yard record holder (and Olympic bronze medallist in 1952), who was running for the Polytechnic Harriers against the Centipede Club, so called by the way, because it was limited to fifty members and hence a hundred legsⁱⁱ. Roger Bannister was its honorary secretary.

On 17th May, I went to London with the Oxford team to compete against all the then 18 other universities in the Universities' Athletic Union Championships, with John Wilkinson. Oxford scored maximum points in the 100 yards, insofar as John won and I was the runner-up. That day both Ross and I were nominated for membership of the Achilles Club.”

After Cambridge's greatest lead in the series' score, Oxford, beginning in 1948, embarked upon ten successive years of victory so that by 1957 they had overtaken Cambridge. Public interest in the 'Varsity Match was heightened by Oxford's success in the so-called blue riband event of athletics, the mile, where Roger Bannister and Chris Chataway (Magdalen) won from 1947 to 1953. Chataway followed Bannister's 'Varsity record-breaking exploits with a win in 1951, before setting a new record of 4:10.2 the following year, and, in 1953, further lowering this to 4:08.4.

In November 1947, Roger Bannister had received an invitation to become a “possible” for the 1948 Olympic Games to be held at Wembley. These “possibles” were to receive special assistance that ranged from special coaching to food parcels given by the Dominions to supplement the meagre food rations currently available in Britain. Bannister describes his reaction to this invitation in his autobiography *First Four Minutes*:

“I felt I was not ready at the time for competition of Olympic standard. Though I might possibly survive these tense conditions and even reach the final, I thought it would prejudice my chances for the 1952 Games. So I declined the invitation to become a “possible”...It never occurred to me that there was anything strange in my action - it seemed the only sensible

course. My decision received considerable publicity - "Bannister says he's too young"."

Other Oxford athletes did represent their country at the 1948 Olympics, including Roger Barkway in the 110m hurdles, Peter Curry and Geoffrey Tudor (Christ Church) in the 3000m steeplechase and Eric Prabhakar Philip (Christ Church and India) in the 100m and 200m. One Oxford athlete who failed to gain selection, however, was John Wilkinson (Brasenose) who had come up to Oxford as the 100 yard Public Schools Champion, and a famous schoolboy international rugby player. In August 1947, he had run the fastest ever 200m by a British athlete when he ran 21.3s in Cologne, and then went on to Paris to win the 100 and 200m titles in the World Student Games. Sadly a rugby injury in early 1948 prevented him from competing in the Olympic Games.

McWhirter continued:

"Towards the end of that golden summer, both Ross and I were selected to represent Oxford in its first post-war foreign tour and indeed the first civilian contact of any kind with the citizenry of the former Third Reich. The tour was organized by Tommy Macpherson who knew Germany all too well as a prisoner of war.

The team, 20 strong, including the team manager Tubby Foyn, assembled at Liverpool Street Station bound for Harwich, the British Zone of Germany. As with all athletic teams, any accurate observer could tell at which events its individual members were likely to specialise in by their shape. There were the high jumping and middle distance running "leptomorphs", tending to linearity and the sprinting and shot putting "mesomorphs", tending to muscularity, each with their own smaller or greater ingredient of "ectomorphy", the tendency towards globularity. However, it would have taken a clairvoyant rather than an acute observer to have predicted that among that carefree band, there were members who were to become a prime ministerⁱⁱⁱ, Europe's fastest sprinter, history's first four minute miler, a leading headmaster and the first editor ever to sell 25 million copies of a book in a life time."

The first match was against B.A.O.R. (British Army of the Rhine). A 100,000-strong crowd watched O.U.A.C. win by 73 points to 68, the final result depending on the 4 x 100m relay which they won comfortably in 42.0s, at that time, the fastest ever by a British club. The second match was against the West Deutsche Studenten-Auswahl in the Mungensdorf Stadium in Cologne, which Oxford lost by 69 points to 72. The reason given for loss being, "...the inherent British weakness in the field events." The final match was against the Combined Services, which Oxford won by a single point, 65 points to 64.



Roger Bannister at Iffley Road with the distinctive Victorian O.U.A.C. pavilion in the background



Roger Bannister as a young Blue

O.U.A.C. in the post-war era

The period of the late-1940s was one of great change for athletics at Oxford. The status of the University Blue was beginning to change. Almost half a century earlier, Walter Henderson described the importance of attaining his Blue with these words:

“In October 1900 I went up to Trinity College, Oxford. In March of the following year, I received my full Blue for the high jump. The letter from the president of the O.U.A.C. announcing this award in formal terms is preserved as one of my treasures; and it may indeed be doubted whether any love-letter has ever given its recipient a thrill greater than that inspired in me by this comparatively formal and harmless communication.”

However, of the 1950s, Roger Bannister made the following observations:

“A Blue has no longer quite the distinction it used to have. Now that undergraduates cannot afford to go down from Oxford with no degree, or even an inferior one, sport takes second place to work. The picture of a noisy crowd of Blues parading crested sweaters, almost invisible beneath yards of coloured scarfing, as they wander from Vincent’s to Iffley Road, is now out of date. Old Blues say “Oxford is not what it was”. It never is.”

Of athletics at Oxford during his era, Bannister had this to say:

“Even before the war, the balance of athletic prestige in this country had shifted away from the older universities, which at one time provided the majority of the country’s athletes. University athletes formerly confined themselves to university events, which provide strenuous competition throughout the year, summer and winter. They suffer from unremitting efforts to maintain racing fitness in the middle of winter, when the university relays and cross-country fixtures are held. Now most of them attempt to reach a further peak for national and international competition in late summer.

Most university athletes belong also to local athletic clubs, and I am convinced that their approach can be helpful to all clubs. The university method has had great success yet is apparently casual.

Undergraduates are, without exception, haunted by the fear of being thought to take anything seriously. I know that I developed the pose of apparent indifference to hide the tremendous enthusiasm which I felt for running, from the day I set foot in

Oxford. Behind this general facade I found I could quickly learn a great deal about training. This was regarded as a highly individual affair. Nothing is sacred in Oxford and every training programme was attacked and analysed. There was no slavish adherence to outmoded dogma or athletic ritual as there seemed to be in the rowing world.”

In April 1948, Bannister was elected President of O.U.A.C., despite being, at that time, the youngest member of the club. He outlined his plans for O.U.A.C. in *First Four Minutes*:

“My plans for the club were very ambitious. I had schemes for raising the membership and providing coaching by a professional. This was a revolutionary step, but Oxford had come to rely too much on sportsmen from Europe and the Dominions, especially in field events... The system of coaching by reigning Blues seemed only to produce results in the running events and hurdles and so was inadequate. I hoped that the American tours by Oxford and Cambridge teams would be revived.

I would not rest until plans were started to replace the old $\frac{1}{3}$ mile track with a new six-lane 440 yards track conforming to international specifications.

At this point the Senior Treasurer gave me a pained look. I said that the existing track was a disgrace to a university that had produced so many fine athletes. They had succeeded in spite of, rather than with the help of the facilities provided. This was nothing to be proud of.

As the year went by I won some support for the idea of a new track. To pacify old Blues who thought the scheme too revolutionary I said, “Don’t worry, we will still run round the opposite way to anyone else!”

The Senior Treasurer patiently bore the responsibility for my enthusiasm, and without his guidance and support the plan would never have been started. We had great difficulty in overcoming the opposition of the University football club, whose pitch occupied the centre of the track. They said they could not possibly manage with anything less than a full size pitch, which could not be contained under the new scheme within a 440 yard track.

At the crucial meeting, when the plan was to be accepted or

rejected, we asked them if they would regard the football pitches used by the Arsenal and some other First Division clubs as adequate. None of these was in fact full size, and we won the day.

The work began. As I stood amid the bulldozers, the piles of clay and the dying turf that summer, I resolved that if ever the track was finished, I would choose it for my biggest races. Two years later the new track was opened by the Vice-Chancellor.”

The 1948 Olympic Games at Wembley starred Louis Davies (Lincoln), an Australian who came to Oxford already holding the Australian Inter-Universities triple jump record at 46ft 9.5” (14m26). He won the high jump in the 1949 ‘Varsity Match with 5ft 10” (1m77), a success he repeated in 1950, this time at 5ft 11” (1m80). This was followed by a British all-comers’ record of 6ft (1m82) in the 1949 match versus the A.A.A..

Also in the Blues team of 1949 was Nick Stacey (St. Edmund Hall), who had won the Royal Navy 100 yard Championships in 1947 and had represented England in the 4 x 100m relay in the Triangular Tournament of 1948. In 1949, after running 21.8s in the O.U.A.C. Sports, he set a Varsity Match record of 22.3s in the 220 yards. Competing for the Combined Universities on the American Tour, he won both the 100 yards and 220 yards against Princeton-Cornell and Harvard-Yale. He went on to represent England in the 1950 Empire Games the following year and two years later competed at the Helsinki Olympics.

Chris Chataway

The name Chris Chataway will forever be linked with that of Roger Bannister because of the record-breaking events at Iffley Road on the evening of May 6th 1954, but Chataway’s performances both whilst at Oxford and afterwards, deserve mention. He went up to Magdalen in September 1950, and to the distress of the O.U.A.C. officers showed a fondness for his first love, in the middle of the front row of his College rugby pack. However, he did a good deal of cross-country running and won the ‘Varsity Cross-Country over 7½ miles on Wimbledon Common in December.

In May 1951, he ran the European 800m champion, John Parlett to an inches finish at Iffley Road to equal Jack Lovelock’s 1931 track record of 4:12.0. A little over a week later in the British Games, he came within four tenths of a second of the 1939 English Native Record for two miles in an international event and later in the month ran third to Belgium’s Gaston Reiff and Alain Mimoun in his introduction to international 5000m.

During 1952, Chataway, then 21, came of age athletically with an extraordinary display of courage in the Helsinki Olympic 5000m final. He was leading the front

group of Emil Zatopek (winner of the 5000m, 10,000m and marathon), Mimoun and the German, Herbert Schade, down the back straight, less than 300m from home but in the desperate surge round the bend, he fell heavily across the curb of the track. He picked himself up, winded and semi-conscious to complete the race and finish fifth in a time nearly 10 seconds faster than his previous best.

In the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, Oxford athletes not only included Roger Bannister (fourth in the 1500m), Chataway and Nick Stacey, but also Alan Dick (Keble) in Great Britain's 4 x 400m team who finished fifth in the final.

Chataway had a disjointed season in 1952-53 due to Finals; however, he ran the lead-off stage in Great Britain's world record 4 x 1 mile relay team, as well as completing an unbeaten run both in the 'Varsity Cross-Country, and the mile in the 'Varsity Sports. Coverage of the 1953 Varsity Match by J.W.P Mallalien in *The Spectator*, casts an interesting light on this particular match, won by Oxford with 73 points to Cambridge's 53^{iv}.

“In mid-afternoon at the White City last Saturday, some ten thousand people found themselves staring intently towards the far end of the stadium. In off moments during the previous half hour, we had glanced over there and seen men trying to clear the high jump. But the high jump was very far away and things of greater interest were usually happening right in front of us.

But now an announcer had spoken through the loud-speaker. G.A.Jeffries of Otago University, New Zealand and Magdalen, the Oxford first string, he told us, had just won the High Jump with a jump of 6ft 2”. He was now going to try and equal the Inter-Varsity record of 6ft 3”.

Jeffries rose on his toes like a man about to dive, then moved gracefully and purposefully into his stride. In the silence, one could almost hear the grass bending beneath his feet. Then, at the very second when he sprang from the ground to soar above the bar, there was a single short crack. At that critical moment, the starter had fired his gun for another race. Jeffries hit the bar with his knees. Thereafter, we saw him no more, for of course, all eyes now turned to the race and when that was over and we looked again to the far end of the stadium, the high jump poles had been dismantled and Jeffries had vanished. Perhaps he had gone to the pictures. The Inter-'Varsity high jump record was the only thing that stayed where it was.

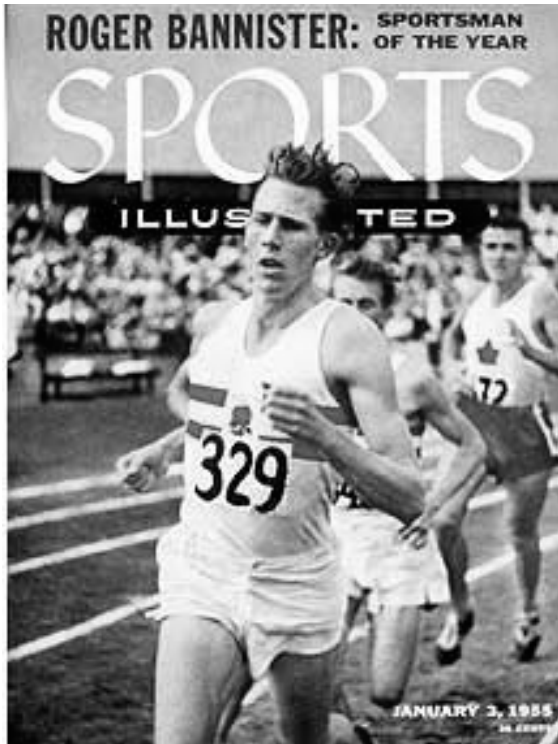
That is typical of the Oxford and Cambridge Sports at the White City. The stadium is so vast that when you are sitting in the centre stand, you cannot see what is happening at either end. But you crowd into the centre because there, you are opposite the

finishing line for the track events. So the field events go on as a decorative but rather puzzling background to the races. Occasionally, the loud-speaker makes it comprehensible. But it is only background. What we really come to see are the races.

And what races they were last Saturday! To take the very last on first, we had the quarter mile. The 100 yards and the 220 yards are over so quickly that you have no time to relish your own excitement. But the quarter mile is just long enough to allow the runners some variation in speed, some holding back until the critical moment and gives the spectators a chance to watch with their minds as well as with their eyes. Though by the time this quarter was run, the match as a whole had been lost and won, there was a special excitement about it, because it was A. Dick's of Oxford, third race of the afternoon and if he won it, he would be the first man in the history of the sports to gain a track treble. Even Cambridge supporters wanted him to pull it off. He did. Half-way round, when just in the lead and going smoothly, he was challenged by Sexton, the Cambridge first string. Sexton might as well have put a fire-cracker down Dick's trousers, for Dick shot away and won by yards.

Next, the mile. In this race, everyone was looking to the red-haired Chataway. The Oxford president was supposed to be concentrating his own efforts on this race instead of taking on the three miles as well, but already seemed to have expended enough energy for one afternoon, trotting from one end of the stadium to the other to encourage his colleagues. When the six runners lined up at the start, all stood upright, bar one. The exception was Millar, the Oxford third string, who crouched into footholds. Obviously he intended to make a flying start and he did.

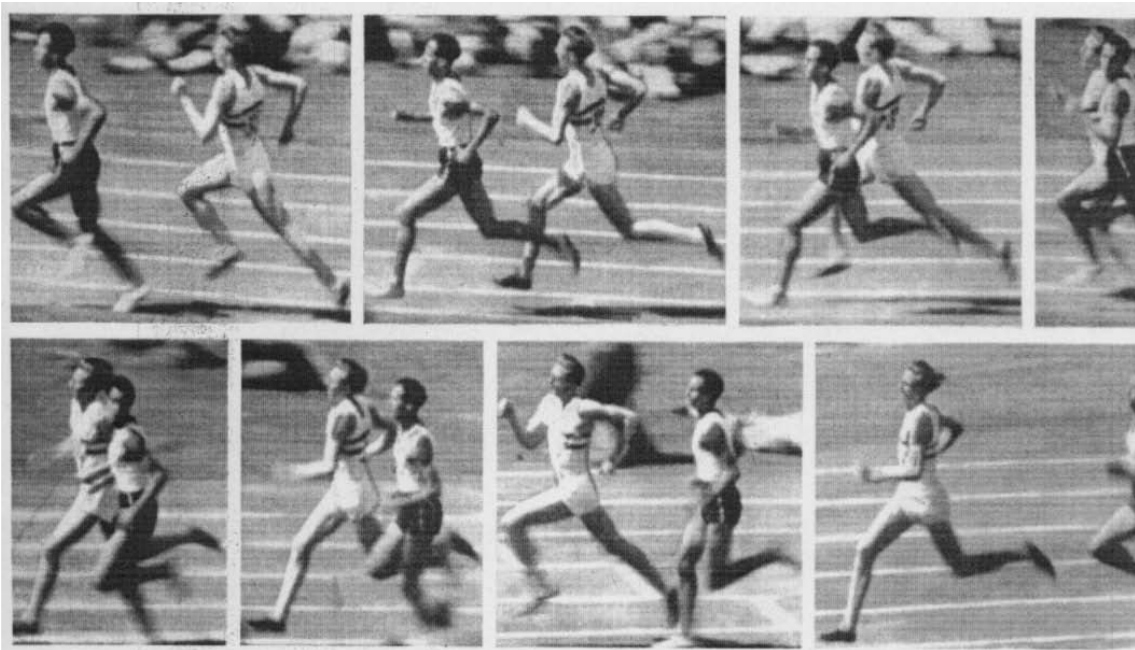
At the gun, he flashed into the lead, arms and legs pounding like steam-hammers, with Chataway loping behind him, Robinson and Law of Oxford just behind him. Round the track went Millar, drawing the others after him, but at the half-mile mark, he was run out and Law, summoned by a turn of Chataway's red head, took over the pacing. The two of them drove on, increasing pressure each time Robinson challenged, then easing very slightly as the challenge faded. Then, in the last quarter of a mile, Chataway went right away and Law, exhausted in his turn, found himself overhauled in the last twenty yards by the gallant Robinson. While the crowd cheered a new record, the record breaker himself was quietly putting on his track-suit and trotting off to some other event. Running a record mile is less effort to Chataway than running for a bus is to us."



Top left: The front of Sports Illustrated featuring Bannister, their *Sportsman of the Year*, during his epic Empire Games win in Vancouver.

Top right: Bannister breaks the tapes at the end of his record-breaking run at Iffley Road.

Below: The vital strides of Bannister's Commonwealth Gold. Landy looks over his left shoulder as Bannister bursts past on his right. Both runners finished in under four minutes.





The start of the first sub-four minute mile. Note Brasher's stance at the start as he prepares to pace the first two laps.



Chataway is voted B.B.C. Sports Personality of the Year in the inaugural show. The trophy is presented by Bannister. Another O.U.A.C. Blue, David Hemery, won the award in 1968.



Chataway inches ahead of Kuts at the finish of their epic battle at the White City, with a new world record of 13:51.6. Kuts was given the same time.



Barclay Palmer (St. Peter's Hall) in competition for Achilles.

The first four-minute mile

The year 1954 was something of a modern *annus mirabilis* for O.U.A.C.. Roger Bannister won the European 1500m and the British Empire and Commonwealth Games mile, the latter by beating the new world record holder, Australian, John Landy, with a devastating sprint coming off the final bend. At the same games in Vancouver, Derek Johnson (Lincoln) won gold in the 880 yards and silver in the 4 x 400m relay. Chris Chataway was narrowly beaten into second at the European Championships 5000m, behind his great rival Vladimir Kuts (both recording 13:56.6) but won the British Empire and Commonwealth Games three miles to complete a trio of golds for O.U.A.C. in the middle distances.

However, it was the date was of May 6th and the annual athletics match at Iffley Road between O.U.A.C. and the A.A.A. for which 1954 will forever be remembered at O.U.A.C.. The weather was somewhat cool and overcast with a breeze and a threat of rain in the air. In preparation, Bannister had run a majestic solo three laps in high wind on Paddington Recreation Ground in 2:59.9. After a final sharpening 880 yards in 1:54 and a slow easy four mile stride, he rested for the next few days.

The line-up for the race was (from the inside) George Dole (O.U.A.C.), Chris Brasher (A.A.A.), Alan Gordon (O.U.A.C.), Bannister (A.A.A.), Chataway (A.A.A.), and Tom Hulatt (A.A.A.). After a false start by Brasher, they got away and Brasher led round the first lap in 57.4s, so detaching Bannister (second) and Chataway (third) from the field. At 880 yards the order was unchanged with Brasher at 1:58 and Bannister a-yard-and-a-half back.

Just before the 2½ lap mark Bannister uttered the single command, “Chris,” and Chataway took the lead, passing the bell in 3:00.4. Just 230 yards from the finish Bannister changed up a gear and drew away to win by 45 yards.

The announcer, Norrish McWhirter, proclaimed an English Native, British, British All-Comers', European, Empire and World Record in three minutes, fifty-nine point four seconds. Bannister in the process, had passed the 1500m mark in a world-record-equalling time of 3:43.0, some three seconds ahead of Chris Chataway who finished the mile in 4:07.2.

More success

Incredibly, there was further success in store for O.U.A.C. in 1954. The occasion was the *Evening News* floodlit promotion on October 13th, featuring a match between London and Moscow, with Chris Chataway and Vladimir Kuts coming face to face in the 5000m. These two athletes had become great rivals having run so closely for the European title in Berne, Switzerland. In this famous re-match at the White City, both shattered the world record, Chataway winning in the last ten strides by one tenth of a second, with the 35,000 crowd on their feet and 12

million television viewers on the edge of their seats.

Following Bannister and Chataway came Derek Johnson whose performances at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Vancouver have already been noted. At the European Championships, he was badly jostled at the start of the 800m and hampered later in the race, but still hung on to finish fourth in 1:47.4. Some fifty minutes later in the heat of the 4 x 400m relay he produced a leg of a little over 47 seconds. The next day in the final, he ran a leg of 46.2s, a personal best, but the British team was disqualified.

Historically, the throwing events at Oxford had not featured highly in the national scene since the days of Malcolm Nokes in the hammer. However, in the mid-1950s, this was to change as a result of the performances of the theology student, Barclay Palmer (St. Peter's). Weighing over 17 stone and blessed with a height of 6ft 6", Palmer did not emerge from the ranks of mediocre shot putters until after intensive weight training in 1955.

In 1953, Palmer represented Oxford in the 'Varsity Match shot-put, discus and javelin, but secured only two thirds and a fourth. The next year, he improved to 43ft 8" (13m31) to win the 'Varsity shot. In 1955, having again won against Cambridge, this time with 47ft 1" (14m35), and the first of two consecutive A.A.A. titles, Palmer improved significantly to 52ft 2.25" (15m90) in an international match against Germany and 53ft (16m15) at Bucharest in September. He opened the 1956 season with an Inter-'Varsity record of 53ft 11" (16m43) and improved to the point when in October, he registered a put four inches beyond J.A.Savidge's British Empire record, with 55ft 6" (16m91).

1956 Olympics

At the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games, Derek Johnson won silver for Great Britain, being beaten in the last few strides by Tom Courtney of the United States by only a tenth of a second. Derek also won a bronze medal, anchoring the British 4 x 400m team home.

Also representing Great Britain at Melbourne were Chris Chataway, in the 5000m; Ian Boyd (Brasenose), winner of the 'Varsity Match mile in 1955, in the 1500m; Bob Shaw (Exeter), winner of the 'Varsity Match 120 yards hurdles in 1955, in the 400m hurdles; and Barclay Palmer (St. Peter's Hall) in the shot put.

Another renowned international of that period was Peter Isbester (Trinity) who won the discus in both 1956 and 1957. It is no wonder that Peter Lovesey in the *Centenary History of the A.A.A.* referred to this period in these terms:

“1956 ended an era, the third flowering of Oxford and Cambridge talent. The briefest and arguably most brilliant, was the mid-fifties, with Bannister, Chataway, Brasher and Johnson,

and the four minute mile as the most exquisite bloom. After 1956, even the presence of Adrian Metcalfe and Herb Elliot could not alter the fact that the Oxbridge garden had wilted. A reason often suggested for the success of University athletes in the twenties and thirties is that they had the leisure to train. Paradoxically the post-war generation of Oxford and Cambridge runners, notably Bannister and Chataway, trained to schedules ridiculously light by comparison with employed athletes such as Gordon Pirie and Derek Ibbotson^v. But the pace of improvement in athletics meant increasingly that top-class athletes could spare little time for anything but training.”

Despite the undoubted truth of Lovesey’s comments, Oxford continued to produce numerous athletes of international standard. Included amongst these were John Young (St. Edmund Hall) who won the 100 yards from 1958-60. Young became the A.A.A. Champion over the short sprint in 1956, whilst still a junior. He went on to represent England at rugby union.

Other stars included Roger Lane (Brasenose), who won the javelin in 1959 and 1960 and Charles van Dyck (St. Edmund Hall) winner of the high jump in 1960 (setting a new record of 1m93), 1961 and 1963, who had the somewhat odd distinction of winning the Freshman’s high jump in 1960 at a greater height than that at which the pole vault was won.

8. 1958-1975 – The end of the Golden Era?

After Oxford's ten-match series of wins ended in 1957, Cambridge was victorious in 1958 with the Dark Blues winning again in 1959 and 1960. This was followed by a mini-revival by Cambridge who won the next four matches from 1961 until 1964. Oxford's star athlete of this period was Adrian Metcalfe (Magdalen), who won the 440 yards from 1961-64. In 1962, he completed a dazzling triple over 100 yards, 200 yards and 440 yards in times of 9.7s, 21.0s and 47.0s, all new records for the Inter-'Varsity Sports.

Metcalfe achieved success on a wider scale by winning gold in the 400m at the 1963 World Student Games at Pato Allegre, Brazil. He joined with John Boulter (Queen's), the winner of the mile at that year's 'Varsity Match, in the 4 x 400m relay squad. He also won silver medals in the 4 x 400m relay at the 1962 European Championships and at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, although success in the individual events eluded him as a senior.

Putting the early 1960s behind them, Oxford set out on another ten match unbeaten streak. This included a match tie in 1973, with the score at 97 points each and their record win in 1967 by 101 points to 52.

This period saw a number of changes in the 'Varsity Match events, namely the inclusion of the triple jump in 1959, followed in 1963 by the 400m hurdles and the 3000m steeplechase, so that it began to take on the shape of a full international programme.

The 1969 match saw a change in the points scoring, with first and second remaining at 5 and 3 each respectively, whilst third now merited 2 points and fourth 1 point. In 1970, it came into line with IAAF rules with track races being converted to international metric distances, and throws and jumps being recorded metrically. Finally, in 1972, the sprint relay was included and the Centipedes-Alverstone match was held in conjunction with the Blues' contest.ⁱ

Nomadic years

As the new format of national athletics began to take shape, with a national league system, not only at senior level, but also for young athletes, so club athletics began to flourish and the importance of the 'Varsity Match began to decline, slipping quietly from public prominence. The vast expanses of the White City became less suitable for the smaller crowds attracted to the event and so it moved to Crystal Palace National Sports Centre for 1973.ⁱⁱ

However, the increasing costs of hiring venues like Crystal Palace at the weekend saw a further move in 1974, this time to the West London Stadium. In 1976, it returned for one final time to Crystal Palace, when it was held on a weekday, before relocating permanently to the new synthetic track at Iffley Road.ⁱⁱⁱ

Jeffrey Archer

Despite the decline in importance of university athletics, the 1960s have in retrospect brought considerable publicity to O.U.A.C. through the person of Jeffrey Archer (Brasenose), the present Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare. Archer became one of the youngest members of the House of Commons in 1969, only three years after his presidency of the O.U.A.C.. By doing so, he was following a similar career path to Chris Chataway, whom Archer has admitted to admiring greatly. The setting for Archer's arrival at Oxford and particularly his involvement with the athletic club, has been recounted by Michael Crick in his biography, *Jeffrey Archer – Stranger than Fiction*:

“In 1963, Oxford was still one of the great centres of British athletics. Many remembered the historic day nine years earlier when a medical student, Roger Bannister, had broken the four-minute mile at the University sports track, Iffley Road. British athletics in the early '60s was still dominated by people from public and grammar schools and the Universities. The arrival of a generation of inner-city black athletes was fifteen years away. The sport still looked to Oxford and Cambridge for its new stars, though the Oxbridge reputation for athletic excellence was already in slow decline. In Archer's time, the annual Varsity athletics match was still held at White City, the former Olympic stadium in West London and received the sort of coverage still enjoyed by the Boat-Race nowadays. And even minor events in the Oxbridge athletics calendar were covered in the national press. Oxford's biggest name was the former club President (1963) Adrian Metcalfe. Oxford boasted other stars too – the massive American discus thrower, Stan Sanders^{iv} and the Kenyan Olympic hurdler, Steve Rotich.”

Archer had achieved some success as a junior athlete. His school coach had suggested to him that Oxford might provide an ideal environment for his athletic talent to be nurtured and to eventually blossom. Crick continued:

“Within only a few days of arriving at Oxford, Archer had a surprising impact. In a freshmen's match against the (University) second team, in the 100 yards, he beat the club President Michael Hogan, who was then one of Britain's top all-round sprinters and hurdlers. Against Cambridge, freshman Jeffrey triumphed in both the 100 and 200 yards and also made the national press, but for the wrong reasons. Cheering on competitors in the mile, he was struck by a discus thrown by Stan Sanders. They carried him off on a stretcher, but Archer insisted on watching the final track event and only then agreed to go for a check-up.

Archer is often modest about his athletics. "I've run against him nineteen times and he's won nineteen times," Archer says of his competitive record against Adrian Metcalfe. However, this is not strictly true, for in April 1964, in the Oxford club trials, he inflicted a surprise defeat on his famous friend. Archer again made the national press. It was the first time in four years that Metcalfe had been beaten in a University race at Oxford. But as if to show it had been no fluke, Archer beat Metcalfe again in the match against Loughborough, nine days later. It was a sign of how good a runner Archer was becoming.

Archer won his first athletics Blue in the Varsity match of May 1964, running in both the 100 yards and the 220 yards. In the 100 yards, he narrowly finished second to Metcalfe, though Archer was extremely fortunate. Three times he jumped the gun but he was given only one warning.

That spring he was on the fringes of International recognition and was picked for the Great Britain "A" against the Benelux countries. But his Olympic dreams faded as by the autumn of 1964, he was left to watch events on television as both Hogan and Metcalfe competed in the Tokyo Olympics, with Metcalfe collecting a silver medal in the 4 x 400m relay.

The O.U.A.C. had recognised Archer however, by electing him club secretary for 1964-5. The secretaryship of the Athletics Club was usually a stepping stone to the presidency a year later. Archer made a quick impression by organizing the inter-college athletics finals, according to the Oxford Mail:

"Unlike many of his predecessors, he had gathered round him a large number of helpers and his tight schedule of track and field events lasting three and a half hours was carried through efficiently. In addition, he made frequent announcements to officials, competitors and spectators and at the end of a busy day, thanked all those who had assisted."

In May 1965, Archer won his second athletics Blue, triumphing in the 100 yards. Doubts had arisen however, over his eligibility to compete. Archer had completed his Dip. Ed and was now conducting independent research. Years later, the Daily Mirror began to make enquiries about whether Archer had been qualified to run in the 1965 and 1966 Varsity matches. It later transpired that Arthur Selwyn, the then Senior Treasurer of the athletics club, had consulted his opposite number at Cambridge and it was "agreed that Mr. Archer could continue to run for the

University until his research was completed.” Later that summer, Archer would compete in the Oxford-Cambridge US tour, during which the visiting team was invited to compete in the Canadian National Championships. Archer won the 220 yards title in 21.6s.

At the club’s AGM, Archer defeated Damien Knight (Exeter) to become club President, the same prestigious office that had once been held by his two friends, Michael Hogan and Adrian Metcalfe, and his role model, Chris Chataway, thirteen years earlier.”

Of his presidency, Crick noted:

“Relatively speaking, Oxford athletics had been going through a bad patch. Between 1961 and 1964, Cambridge had won all four Varsity matches in a row, following a period of almost complete domination by Oxford in the 1950s. But at the start of October, Archer set his colleagues a new, highly ambitious target: a clean sweep of the eight major confrontations with Cambridge during the course of a year, something Oxford had never achieved before.^v

Archer based his strategy on improving club morale and unity. In particular, he was keen to heal a rift between the introverted cross-country runners, who generally came from northern grammar schools and the more explosive, extrovert track and field men like himself, who more often came from public schools. He stressed that he was President of the whole club, cross-country included; he even appointed himself captain of the fifth cross-country side.^{vi}

“He developed a real sense of excitement,” says Tim Taylor, who succeeded him as President. “The club moved very much to centre stage in the university. He took an interest in everyone.”

He set an example in training. He’d be out on the track every afternoon doing short fifty or sixty yard bursts again and again and again and he worked away in the weights room, under the main grandstand. “He trained his socks off,” says Tim Jones, the then club secretary. “And he was loud in praise of people when they were doing well.”



Archer running the low hurdles



Jeffrey Archer's winning 1965 O.U.A.C. team in their new tracksuits.
Top Row (left-to-right): M.Hauck, R.A.Czerniawksi, R.L.Duncan, J.O.C.Haes,
P.B.Cross, I.G.Roberts, A.L.Heath, M.C.Mertens,
R.E.Allen.
Middle Row: N.Green, F.F.Brwon, J.N.Barry, H.Altmann,
J.Waterhouse, G.McBride, J.Antill, R.A.S.Offer, S
Young;
Bottom Row: W.G.Day, A.M.Ronay, M.P.Sharpe, T.L.Jones,
J.H.Archer, T.M.Taylor, J.W.Bryant, D.A.Roscoe,
H.H.A.Pullman.



David Hemery (St. Catherine's) in the high hurdles

As he looked forward to that year's Varsity Match at White City, Archer had a personal problem however: Oxford had a surplus of first-class sprinters. Despite having run at White City for the previous two years, there was now a danger that he might not be good enough to run for the Varsity team that he was meant to captain. Archer's answer was to try for selection in a new event altogether – the 220 yard hurdles.

On the day of the big match at White City, Archer knew he had almost fulfilled his ambitious grand slam. Month by month through the autumn, winter and spring, his club had so far won six events out of six against Cambridge. To foster team spirit, he equipped the squad with new tracksuits and took them to stay overnight at a hotel. In his pre-match talk, the President rallied his men by telling them it was their duty to be magnificent.

And they were. The match announcer revealed a healthy Oxford victory by 87 points to 66. Archer's "effervescent leadership," said *The Observer*, "had brought Oxford not to a pitch where their nerves jangle, but one of confidence at a lower tempo." It was a big improvement from the Cambridge domination of the early '60s.

Three of Oxford's points were won by Archer in the 220yards hurdles, where he finished second. And Oxford's first clean sweep was clinched the following Monday when the second team overcame their Cambridge opponents."

Although not selected to compete in the Empire Games that summer as he had hoped for, Archer nevertheless achieved one of his lifetime ambitions of running for his country, when selected to compete in a match between Great Britain and Sweden. His name still tops the club's all-time rankings for 100 yards today.

Other internationals

Other athletes gaining international honours during this era included Mike Ralph (St. Edmund Hall), who won the triple jump from 1960 to 1963 and the long jump in 1960; Jonathan Hutton (Balliol), who won the pole vault in 1961 and 1964; Henk Altmann (New and South Africa), who won the three miles from 1966-68; Chris Pardee (Magdalen and USA), who won the high jump from 1967-69, setting a new record of 2m00 in 1967; John Boulter (Queens), a double Olympian who set a European 880 yard record of 1:47.8 in the Harvard-Yale match of 1963, the same year he won the 'Varsity Match mile; Mike Hauck (St. Catherine's), who won the 100 yards in 1967 and 1968 and the 220 yards from 1967-69 and Dennis Roscoe (Keble), who won the discus in 1966 and 1967.

Following them, in the 1970s, there was Rod Speed (St. Edmund Hall), who won the shot in 1970; Phil Lewis (Lincoln) who won the 800m from 1970-73, setting a match record of 1:48.5 in 1970; Steve White (Wadham), who won the 200m from 1971-74, the 100m in 1974 and the long jump in 1971, 1972 and 1974; and Julian Goater (St. Edmund Hall), who won the 5000m from 1973-75, setting a new match record of 13:51.8 in 1973, and the 1500m in 1974-75.

Over the country, Goater won the English National title on Parliament Hill in 1981 by the biggest margin in history (two minutes). That year, he went on to finish just outside the medals at the World Cross-Country Championships, in fourth place.

David Hemery

In the 'Varsity Match of 1970, the 110m hurdles was won by a certain David Hemery (St. Catherine's). Later that summer, he went on to win the gold medal in the 110m hurdles at the 1970 world student games in Turin, Italy. These impressive wins, however, were treated as somewhat of a formality given that two years earlier, he had earned the title of Olympic champion and world record holder over the 400m hurdles, with the remarkable time of 48.12s. His Olympic win in Mexico City has been heralded as one of the greatest ever performances by a British athlete. His margin of victory was the largest since 1924 with, coincidentally, all three of the next runners recording exactly 49 seconds. Hemery achieved further success with gold in the high hurdles at the 1966 and 1970 Commonwealth Games and silver in the same event at the 1969 European Championships. At the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, Hemery completed his collection of Olympic medals with a bronze medal in the 400m hurdles and silver in the 4 x 400m relay.

Interestingly, it was David's brother John who left a bigger mark on the 'Varsity Match records. John, like David studied at St Catherine's in the early-1970s, winning all three hurdles events for Oxford in 1972. He returned to study at Corpus Christi, Cambridge where in 1982, a decade after he made his first impact on the 'Varsity Match, he broke two 'Varsity records with a win in the 400m hurdles in 52.4s, as well as being part of the Cambridge 4 x 400m team whose record of 3:16.0 still stands.

9. 1976 to the present - O.U.A.C. today

The new track

The mid-1970s saw dramatic changes taking place at Iffley Road. Through the generosity of the Rhodes Foundation, funds had been found to upgrade the athletic track to both all-weather status and 400m standard to satisfy the IAAF requirements. The surface chosen for the track was Chevron, which had been used for the 1974 Commonwealth Games held in Christchurch, New Zealand, perhaps not a wise choice in view of the track's hardness, and the ambient temperatures at which most of the club's training and competition takes place. A surface intended primarily for competition in situations of higher temperatures than those experienced by early May at Oxford tended to produce an undesirable crop of injuries.

Two other problems arose as a direct result of the new track. In the first place the old 220 yards straightway became tennis courts, and the 4 x 200m hurdles relay which previously had been run as a shuttle in the 'Varsity Relays meeting, now posed considerable problems with legs 1 and 3 being run the wrong way round. Secondly, with the hammer re-included along with the 4 x 400m relay in 1975, problems once again arose with O.U.A.F.C., who rather predictably objected to hammers landing on their pitch. In the early days of the matches at Iffley Road, the hammer event was held at the Horsepath track, some three miles away, with the attendant problems of timing and transport.

Eventually the hammer - along with the discus during the football season - was banished to the "swamp,"ⁱ with the problems of hammers disappearing into the mud, or hooked throws tending to land in an even greater swamp (the river). However, over the years the situation improved marginally with new circles and cages, and some slight improvement to the landing area; and finally, in the early-2000s, these events were able to return to the track area.

Ladies at Oxford

The most important development of the last 30 years has been the advent of the ladies' match, which first took place in 1975. It is not proposed to include the ladies' match in this brief history; rather they deserve one for themselves. Nevertheless, the expansion of O.U.A.C. to include female athletes and the inclusion of the ladies' match to the 'Varsity programme has undoubtedly been one of the biggest changes the club has undergone in its long history.ⁱⁱ

At this time (2009), of the 35 ladies' 'Varsity Matches, Oxford has won ten, although four have these have come consecutively since 2006.ⁱⁱⁱ In 1996, 1999 and 2006, the Dark Blues succeeded in winning both Blues and second team matches, the modern day grand slam. 1996 was the first occasion on which either university had achieved it. Unfortunately for Oxford, Cambridge then succeeded in doing the

same in 1997.

The relative strengths of the Oxford and Cambridge ladies' teams in the early history of the match is highlighted by the fact that of the fifteen 'Varsity Match records, fourteen were held by Cambridge ladies in 1988. However, the situation has quite definitely improved, with the middle distances establishing itself as the Oxford ladies' forte. Indeed, there has been considerable international representation in the form of Jo Latimer (Hertford), Ellen O'Hare (Merton)^{iv}, Jo Dering (Exeter), Katie Skorupska (New College) and Sian Brice (née Pilling) (Queen's).

Stephanie Cook (Lincoln) became the first O.U.A.C. Blue to win an Olympic gold since David Hemery, by winning the inaugural women's Modern Pentathlon in Sydney in 2000.

Recent Internationals

Despite the widening gap between university and international performances, the club's top ten ranking lists clearly indicate that in most events, and in particular the technical field events, the standards continues to develop, as also does a still-impressive list of international athletes who have represented the university, including Craig Masback (Trinity) who won the 800m and 1500m in 1978 and 1979.

In 1979, Craig ran a 3:52.02 mile, placing him sixth on the world all-time rankings. He also ran a sub-four minute mile at Iffley Road, becoming the first athlete to do so since Bannister, 24 years earlier, though clocking a time just outside Bannister's track record. Craig remains active in the sport and was for many years the Chief Executive of United States Track and Field.

Nick Brawn (Oriol) won both the 5000m and the 3000m Steeplechase in 1980 and the steeplechase again in 1981, before turning to the marathon and running the world's fastest debut.

Dwayne Heard (Magdalen) held the record number of individual 'Varsity wins, with eleven over a period of six years. They were the 200m in 1986, long jump from 1983-88, and triple jump in 1984, 1985, 1987 and 1988.

Richard Nerurkar (University) won the 'Varsity Match 5000m in 1984, 1985 and 1987 before winning gold in the 1993 World Cup Marathon, finishing fifth in the European 10,000m in 1990, fifth in the 1996 Olympic Games at Atlanta, and fourth in the 1994 European Championship Marathon.

Simon Mugglestone, (Hertford and Keble) came up to Oxford in 1987 as European junior 5000m champion and being tipped as Britain's future great hope in the middle distances. However, despite his commendable performances whilst representing Oxford, including winning both the BUSA 5,000m and BUSA Cross-



Stephanie Cook (Lincoln) during her memorable run at Sydney, which brought her the gold medal. Her 3000m run of 10:03.16 was 19 seconds faster than any of the other competitors, taking her from eighth to first place overall.



Simon Mugglestone (Herford and Keble) breaks Bannister's 36 year-old track record at the 1990 'Varsity Match, narrowly beating former A.A.A. 1500m indoor champion, Andy Geddes (Brasenose) who had forced much of the early pace. Bannister can be seen on the infield, looking on with interest and with his hands to his watch.

Country^v, as well as defeating five time world cross-country champion and 1988 Olympic champion John Ngugi (Kenya) at the Portsmouth international in June 1990, an achilles tendon injury meant that he was unable to achieve his full potential. Simon won the 'Varsity Match 5000m and 1500m double from 1988-91, breaking the 1500m record twice, the second time, *en route* to a 3:58.9 mile, thus removing Roger Bannister's 3min 59.4s from the Iffley Road Ground Records in the process. He also won four consecutive outright 'Varsity cross-country titles (1987-90).

Most recently, Pierre Faber (Keble and South Africa) has left an indelible mark on the Varsity records. Pierre arrived in Oxford in 1995, as a Rhodes Scholar and the reigning South African Decathlon Champion and African Continental decathlon record holder. Pierre won twelve 'Varsity Match events during his four years in Oxford, eclipsing the record mark set by Dwayne Heard. His range of events made the record all the more impressive, recording wins in the hammer and high jump (once each), the pole vault (twice) and the discus and shot (four times each), as well as being part of a winning sprint relay team. His final win in the shot put set a new Varsity Record (16m75), removing the previous record that had stood since 1966.

Ian Williams

Another sportsman of note in recent history was Ian Williams (St. Catherine's), an Australian international at rugby, who won the sprint double in the 1989 'Varsity Match. Ian's experience of athletics at Oxford described in his own words from his autobiography, *In Touch – Rugby: Life Worth Living*^{vi}, provided a lucid account of an O.U.A.C. athlete of the modern era.

“Obligatory for any new student coming up to Oxford is a visit to the Freshers' Fair. On my arrival in September, I had eagerly awaited my opportunity to see some of the diverse clubs that Oxford University had to offer...Inspired by Chariots of Fire, I hovered near the athletics club booth until there was no-one around and then scampered over to speak to a skinny young bloke who turned out to be Simon Mugglestone, then the reigning European Junior 5000m champion who has since gone on to represent Great Britain a number of times. He asked for my best times in the past year over 100 metres and 200 metres which was a little embarrassing as the last time I had run a competitive race was at school in 1982. He looked a bit sceptical but said he would be in contact about a freshers' track meet at Cambridge later in the term.

Simon popped in to see me some weeks later on, the day of the Bedford match at Iffley Road and asked whether I could compete the following day at Cambridge since they couldn't find anyone else. The bus would leave at 8am from Martyrs'

Memorial. The following morning I could barely move and certainly had no interest in sitting in a bus for a couple of hours, but finally my conscience got the better of me and I quickly grabbed a pair of old spikes and headed out of the door. The Cambridge University Athletics Club use a run-down cinder track on the outskirts of town. The weather had been inclement and there were small pools of water on the track surface. I tried to warm up and stretch but my hamstrings wouldn't move. Without blocks, I slipped at the start of the 100 metres and recovered only to finish a distant 3rd (out of four) in the slowest time of this century. I spent the rest of the day dreading the running of the 200 metres. Luckily, I drew lane one, so that I would at least have a chance to see how the other runners were going and pick up a little on the stagger. I got to a great start, leading by a couple of metres off the bend but with 80 metres left, I started running on the spot and as the others rushed past me, I saw the finish line receding in the distance. Some hours later, or so it seemed, I hit the tape and collapsed on the side of the track.

At the post-match tea, I became quite embarrassed when I overheard some of the athletes talking about this international rugby player who was supposed to run today but hadn't shown up. Actually, he had, but no-one would have recognised him from the way he ran. On the return bus-trip, I sat next to the newly elected president of the athletics club^{vii}, the first woman to be elected to the position in the club's 143 year history, something I found amazing in itself. She proceeded to give me a lecture on how all these foreigners shouldn't be allowed to come to Oxford and steal Blues from the undergraduates.

During the spring term, I tried to get down to the track as much as possible and keep in shape by varying my training routine. I had played rugby non-stop for almost two years and I felt that, by doing something different, I could maintain my freshness in training and retain my competitive edge for the coming season against the Lions. At this stage, I was nothing more than a rugby player who could run a bit as opposed to the serious athlete I wanted to be. However, Graham Tanner, one of the Oxford coaches, saw some potential in me and took me under his wing. He started to show me how to run correctly for the first time in my life. It was a little strange to think that after all the sprints I had done in rugby training, only now was I learning how to run properly. I worked hard with starting blocks and on increasing the length of my strides. There were a number of meets against other university and club teams during the term, but again my performances were mediocre as I invariably tightened in the

final stages of the races to finish in the middle of the field. An athletics Blue looked an impossibility; just to make the final Blues team would be an achievement in itself.

On the first weekend of the summer term, the British Universities Championships were being held in Derby and I sneaked in as a late entry in the 100 metres heats. The problem was that it was too late to change the name on the entry form from Segun Osuntokun, our Nigerian triple jumper. This did not initially appear to be a problem but became a little embarrassing as the day proceeded.

I decided the only way to get away with it was to pretend that I had just arrived from South Africa. It seemed to work all right, until a few of the runners realized that I was actually the Aussie rugby player from Oxford.

I progressed through my heat and a second place in the semi-final put me into the final. Here I was drawn in the lane next to Jamie Henderson, who had already represented Scotland at the 1986 Commonwealth Games as a 17 year old. I got off to a good start and was with the leaders after 60 metres, before they suddenly got into their stride and pulled away effortlessly, leaving me floundering in their wake. The first three all finished in a little over 10.5 seconds, but I was delighted with my 10.83s for fifth. For the first time, I began to feel a little bit like an athlete.

There were about four and a half weeks left before the Varsity match and I decided that I wanted to try and make the team for both the 100 and 200 metres. This meant that I was going to have to do a lot of distance work if I was to have any chance so I trained four or five afternoons a week, going through stride-throughs, stretches and a track session. Slowly but surely, my condition improved through running fast sets of 300 metres, often finishing by the side of the track throwing up. One of the important lessons I learnt was to relax when I began to feel pain and tighten up. The ability to relax when fatigued was one of the reasons I think I played such great rugby later in the season, as I was able to maintain my speed throughout the games, regardless of being tired.

Every year there is a "Fastest Man in Oxford" competition over 60 and 150 metres, the times being added together and the lowest composite score being the winner. I easily won the 60 metres race, but surprised everyone by also winning the 150 metres. The training was beginning to pay off and when the

Blues team was finally announced, I was selected for the 100 and 200 metres, as well as lead-off runner in the 4 x 100 metre relay.

It was a beautiful May day for the match but I was not terribly confident of my chances. To win an athletics Blue, you must achieve two things: first, be selected for the Blues team and second, achieve a certain standard of performance as agreed between the two universities. However, discretionary Blues can be awarded if you don't achieve the required standard but win your event. The standard for 100 metres, 10.8 seconds and the 200 metres, 22.0 seconds, were quite exacting; not only did I have to win but I also had to beat the clock. My competition from Cambridge had been depleted by the withdrawal of international hurdler, Jon Ridgeon, who had won a silver medal at the 1987 World Championships.

My best chance was always going to be the 100 metres and I was determined to take it. Graham Tanner provided some useful last-minute advice, suggesting that I should try and crouch a little higher in my blocks and drive away harder with my elbows to get away. The starter seemed to hold us for an eternity and my leg was beginning to twitch involuntarily when the gun went. I got away well and with a slight lead after 30 metres, I relaxed into my stride and before I knew it, it was over and I had won by a clear metre in 10.8 seconds. The feeling was incredible and my heart was racing and the adrenaline rushed through my veins. For an hour afterwards, I floated rather than walked, in a mixture of relief, fatigue, excitement and joy.

My Blue secured, I could relax for the 200 metres. The competition was going to be stiff as the Cambridge runners, Bob Ryan and Richard Shermur, had finished fifth and sixth at the BUSA Championships and I had never beaten Oxford's other runner, Marcus Browning over the distance. As the slowest runner, I was drawn in lane four, which is a severe disadvantage as you are unable to see the other runners until you are well into the straight. I came out of the blocks smoothly and as I came into the straight towards the grandstand, I could hear the crowd screaming and yelling. I assumed that I was about to be passed, so I glanced out of the corner of my eye but couldn't see anyone yet. The noise was getting louder as I neared the finishing line, but I just kept telling myself to relax and maintain form. I dipped for the line and broke the tape in 21.9 seconds – my personal best by 0.6 seconds. Exhausted and elated, I collapsed on the grass.

It was a strange feeling because it was only a track meet between two universities, yet because of the history and tradition, it had so much more significance. More than anything, it was a personal achievement as I had felt so humiliated months earlier at the freshers' match, but now I had managed to prove myself. The match as a whole was of a very high standard. Simon Mugglestone in the 1500 metres had broken the match record and had also won the 5000m. The following year, he again hit the headlines by breaking Roger Bannister's Iffley Road track record for the mile and later winning a record fourth consecutive Varsity cross-country race. Although the Cambridge men's team had been third at the BUSA Championships, we utterly destroyed them.

However, it was the women's match where the real athletes were to be seen, with no less than nine GB junior and senior representatives on display. Records were set in five events yet the following day, barely a word on the women's match was mentioned in the press. Instead, the *Observer* carried the rather embarrassing story comparing my feats at Oxford to the incomparable C.B.Fry."

10. Of coaches and coaching

Caspar Whitney commented that, "...there is no trainer at the English universities." He admitted, however, that Clement Jackson, known throughout Oxford as "The Jacker" and at the time (1870s), a don at Hertford, "...gave the athletics of his *alma mater* a great deal of personal and valuable attention." Peter Lovesey described Jackson as, "Senior Treasurer, coach and mentor of Oxford athletics."

Jackson's influence on athletics would indeed be hard to exaggerate. Yet by the early part of the twentieth century, the professional coach became thought of as a necessary condition for success in athletics. Hence, in 1920 Oxford appointed Alf Shrubbs, the holder of every world record over imperial distances from two miles to ten miles. However, as a coach Shrubbs was a disappointment. Oxford athletes of this period remember him starting a training session with the words, "Now, gentlemen, we'll just warm up with a few turns," and then, aged over 40, scudding off round the track, oblivious of who followed. He rarely said much, unlike some modern coaches.

During the following years, little changed. Bannister commented:

"I tried hard to find a coach. Athletics coaches developed from the old handyman-masseur trainer at the end of the last century - they were the bath attendant coaches who gradually picked up tips by their acute observation. They had great practical knowledge and judgment. Some were successful runners in their day."

Bill Thomas belonged to this school and was coach for many years to O.U.A.C.:

"Lovelock had great confidence in him. I went to see him, and he stood by the track, bowler-hatted, watching me run round. He grunted continuously but said little. Though the comments he made were probably extremely shrewd, he seemed upset when I asked him why he said this or that. I think he worked intuitively and I needed reasons for the things I did. As I left him I felt disappointed. Lovelock no doubt had faith based on a need of his help. But somehow I did not feel my need so strongly."

His successor was John Jeffrey, who typified the new breed of coaches, a product of Geoffrey Dyson and the A.A.A's National Coaching Scheme. John was a physical education lecturer at the Loughborough Training College.¹ Roger Bannister commented on this appointment:

"At any rate, the universities have realised that times are changing and Oxford has taken the revolutionary step of

appointing a highly qualified professional coach, quite different from the old masseur, handyman trainer and bath attendant coach and is beginning to apply cine camera methods to training and to take full advantage of technical advice of the A.A.A. professional coaches. Never, though, will our universities become so coach conscious and coach dominated as are university sports in the USA.”

John Jeffrey was followed in the role by Sandy Duncan, himself a Blue having won the long jump in the 1935 ‘Varsity Match. During the 1950s his guidance to Oxford athletes was crystallised into his *Oxford Pocket Book of Athletic Training*, a second edition being published in 1957 in conjunction with Kenneth Bone, an Essex schoolmaster who was now coaching at Iffley Road.

In 1963, Lionel Pugh, the A.A.A.’s National Coach for the Midlands and an expert javelin coach was appointed as coach to O.U.A.C. at the princely sum of £300 *per annum*. In a personal communication to the author, Geoffrey Dyson, the A.A.A.’s Chief National Coach wrote:

“Yes, Lionel is going to Oxford - but I do not think we can regard him as settled as that appointment brings in only about £300 a year! It sounds more grand than it really is, financially at least! However...I think that Lionel’s true value will stand out like a beacon.”

However, Lionel’s stay was relatively short, as he soon moved to Canada as one of their national coaches.

Next followed John Heaton, sometime Army 100 yard and 200 yard champion and a physical education lecturer at St Paul’s College of Education, Cheltenham. Once again his tenure was unfortunately short.

However in the mid-1960s along came Alphonse Mack, known to all Oxford athletes as “Captain Mack.” Captain Mack was a regular soldier in the pre-war Polish Army, and as a keen and versatile sportsman, he had been selected as a reserve for the Polish boxing team at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.

With Poland over-run by the Germans in September 1939, Captain Mack escaped through the Balkans and Greece to join the British Army in North Africa. Serving with the Polish Airborne Forces from 1941, he dropped with the ill-fated Polish Brigade at Arnhem.

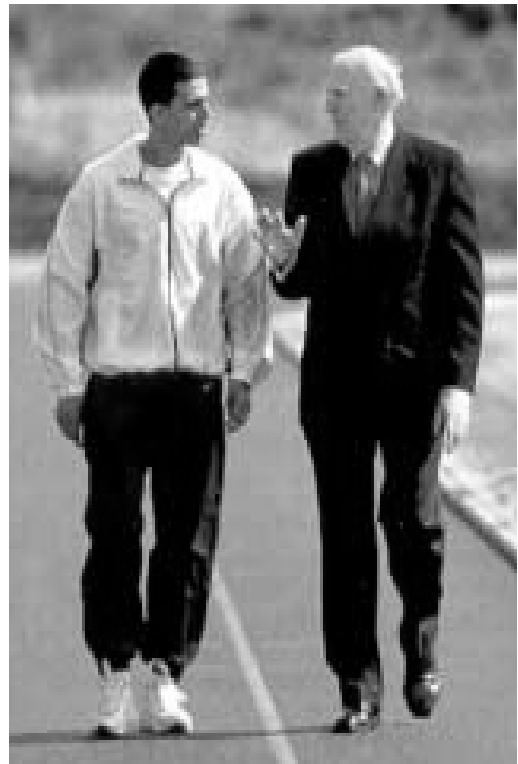
After the war he taught physical education at various independent schools before deciding to qualify to teach in maintained schools by pursuing a mature student’s



Left: Franz Stampfl with the four-minute mile team shortly after their feat.

Below left: Lovelock with Bill Thomas.

Below right: Hicham El-Guerrouj, world record holder for the mile comes to Iffley Road to meet his hero, Roger Bannister, in July 2000. Hicham's record currently stands at 3:43.13, set in Rome in 1999.



course at Westminster College, Oxford. This brought his undoubted skills as an athletics coach into contact with O.U.A.C.. Captain Mack will be remembered for the new year trips he organised to Warsaw University for winter coaching and competition as well as Polish hospitality. Those who attended the Thursday afternoon conditioning sessions will also remember Captain Mack for his “Mackanorys,” where he philosophised on all athletics and the world in general. Captain Mack retired from athletics coaching at Oxford in 1989.

Attempts to keep pace with the wider developments in athletics included the development of the coaching programme and during the 1970s and 1980s and the replacement of the pre-match week at Brighton with a week during the Easter vacation at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre where members of the team could prepare in relatively cloistered calm. The training camps at Lilleshall have since been replaced with warm-weather trips to Portugal.

Let the final words rest with that doyen of Oxford athletics, Sir Roger Bannister:

“The university athlete is first and foremost a human being who runs his sport and does not allow it to run him. He drinks beer and he listens to coaches when he feels inclined. It has produced men whose personality and determination were sufficient to enable them to achieve balanced lives and at the same time, to plan successful athletic careers and to stand the strain of first class competition.”

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Appendix A – ‘Inter-University Sports Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1864	Christ Church Ground, Iffley Road, Oxford	Tie	4-4 ⁱ
1865	Fenner’s Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	6-3
1866	Christ Church Ground, Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5½-3½
1867	Beaufort House Ground, Walham Green	Cambridge	6-3
1868	Beaufort House Ground, Walham Green	Oxford	5-4
1869	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	5½-3½
1870	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	7½-1½
1871	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	5½-3½
1872	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	5½-3½
1873	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	6-3
1874	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	5-4
1875	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	6-3
1876	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	6-3
1877	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	5-4
1878	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	5-4
1879	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	5-4
1880	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	6-3
1881	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	5-4
1882	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	5-4
1883	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	6-3
1884	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	6-3
1885	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	5⅔-3⅓
1886	Lillie Bridge, London	Oxford	6-3
1887	Lillie Bridge, London	Cambridge	6-3
1888	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	5-4
1889	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	5½-3½
1890	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	6-3
1891	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	6½-2½
1892	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	5-4
1893	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	7-2
1894	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	6-3
1895	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	5-4
1896	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	5-4
1897	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	5-4
1898	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	7-2
1899	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Tie	5-5
1900	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	6-4
1901	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	6-4
1902	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	5-4
1903	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	8-2
1904	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Cambridge	8-2
1905	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	6⅓-3⅔
1906	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	7-3
1907	Queen’s Club, Baron’s Court	Oxford	8½-1½

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Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1908	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	6-4
1909	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Oxford	6-4
1910	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	7-3
1911	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	6-4
1912	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Tie	5-5
1913	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Tie	5-5
1914	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	6-4

1915-1919: No matches due to the Great War

1920	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Oxford	5½-4½
1921	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Tie	5-5
1922	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	9-1
1923	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Oxford	7-4
1924	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Tie	5½-5½
1925	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Oxford	6-5
1926	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	8-3
1927	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	9-2
1928	Queen's Club, Baron's Court	Cambridge	8-3
1929	Stamford Bridge	Cambridge	7-4
1930	Stamford Bridge	Cambridge	8-3
1931	Stamford Bridge	Cambridge	8-3
1932	The White City	Cambridge	6-5
1933	The White City	Oxford	8-3
1934	The White City	Oxford	7-4
1935	The White City	Cambridge	7-4
1936	The White City	Cambridge	8-3
1937	The White City	Cambridge	9-2
1938	The White City	Oxford	60-57 ⁱⁱ
1939	The White City	Oxford	76-41

1940-1945: No Matches due to World War Two

Seven unofficial Wartime Matches held at Oxford and Cambridge

1940 ⁱⁱⁱ	<i>Fenner's Ground, Cambridge</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>77-40</i>
1940	<i>Iffley Road, Oxford</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>67-49</i>
1941	<i>Iffley Road, Oxford</i>	<i>Oxford</i>	<i>64½-52½</i>
1942	<i>Fenner's Ground, Cambridge</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>57-51</i>
1943	<i>Iffley Road, Oxford</i>	<i>Oxford</i>	<i>61-47</i>
1944	<i>Fenner's Ground, Cambridge</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>73-35</i>
1945	<i>Iffley Road, Oxford</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>57-51</i>
1946	The White City	Cambridge	65-43
1947	The White City	Cambridge	68½-57½
1948	The White City	Oxford	83-43
1949	The White City	Oxford	72-54

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Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1950	The White City	Oxford	76-50
1951	The White City	Oxford	72½-53½
1952	The White City	Oxford	68-58
1953	The White City	Oxford	73-53
1954	The White City	Oxford	70-56
1955	The White City	Oxford	79-47
1956	The White City	Oxford	87-39
1957	The White City	Oxford	73-53
1958	The White City	Cambridge	79-47
1959	The White City	Oxford	90-45
1960	The White City	Oxford	78-57
1961	The White City	Cambridge	75-60
1962	The White City	Cambridge	71-64
1963	The White City	Cambridge	86-67
1964	The White City	Cambridge	80-73
1965	The White City	Oxford	79-74
1966	The White City	Oxford	87-66
1967	The White City	Oxford	101-52
1968	The White City	Oxford	90-63
1969	The White City	Oxford	105½-81½ ^{iv}
1970	The White City	Oxford	106-80
1971	The White City	Oxford	96-91
1972	The White City	Oxford	99-95
1973	Crystal Palace	Tie	97-97
1974	The West London Stadium	Oxford	115-78
1975	The West London Stadium	Cambridge	111-99
1976	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	114-97
1977	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	114-98
1978	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	112-100
1979	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	113-98
1980	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	110-102
1981	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	110-101
1982	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	115-94
1983	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	110-102
1984	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	125-87
1985	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	114-96
1986	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	124-97
1987	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	111½-107½
1988	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	119½-102½
1989	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	135-87
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	121-102
1991	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	120-103
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	115-105
1993	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	113-108
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	124-98
1995	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	123-100

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Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1996	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	134-89
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	113-109
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	111-109
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	110-102
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	110-102
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	114-97
2002	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	113-96
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	113-99
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	117-103
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	110-102
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	112½-99½
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	130-82
2008	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	116-96
2009	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	129-85
2010	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	107½-102½

Current match score: Oxford 73, Cambridge 56 with 7 ties

Appendix B – Centipedes versus Alverstone Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1949	Fenners, Cambridge	Alverstone	99-27
1950	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	71-54
1951	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	70-56
1952	Fenners, Cambridge	Alverstone	67-59
1953	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	87-38
1954	Fenners, Cambridge	Alverstone	69-57
1955	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	85-41
1956	Fenners, Cambridge	Alverstone	82-44
1957	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	72-63
1958	Fenners, Cambridge	Alverstone	
1959	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	83-52
1960	Milton Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	93-42
1961	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	
1962	Milton Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	88-46
1963	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	102-51
1964	Milton Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	94-59
1965	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	86-57
1966	Milton Road, Cambridge	Centipedes	
1967	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	86½-66½
1968	Milton Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	95-58
1969	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	111-72
1970	Milton Road, Cambridge	Centipedes	98-88
1971	The White City	Alverstone	115-71 ⁱ
1972	The White City	Alverstone	103-89
1973	Crystal Palace	Centipedes	96-92
1974	West London Stadium	Centipedes	96-95
1975	West London Stadium	Centipedes	114-96
1976	Crystal Palace	Centipedes	115-95
1977	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	108-93
1978	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	121-88
1979	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	130-82
1980	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	108-101
1981	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	116-96
1982	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	106-103
1983	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	112½-98½
1984	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	116-92
1985	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	132-79
1986	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	128-94
1987	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	114-101
1988	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	120-102
1989	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	115-107
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	122-100
1991	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	131-92
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	112-109

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Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1993	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	122-98
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	116½-103½
1995	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	115-107
1996	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	126-94
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	118-105
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	134-83
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Centipedes	111-100
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	107-105
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	113½-95½
2002	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	113½-97½
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	114-96
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	122-98
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Centipedes	108-101
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Centipedes	106-105
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	111½-100½
2008	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	108-102
2009	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alverstone	134-80
2010	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alverstone	113-99

Current match score: Alverstone 34, Centipedes 28

Appendix C – Ladies’ Inter-University Athletic Sports Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1975	West London Stadium	Cambridge	67-61
1976	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	67-61
1977	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	66-62
1978	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	72-55
1979	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	75-53
1980	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	78-50
1981	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	73-55
1982	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	79-49
1983	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	66-62
1984	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	69-65
1985	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	80-77
1986	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	89-67
1987	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	93-64
1988	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	97-60
1989	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	84-73
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	88-69
1991	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	95-62
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	80-77
1993	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	96-83
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	91-88
1995	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	90-89
1996	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	97-82
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	93-86
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	98½-78½
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	90-89
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	96-83
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	117-61
2002	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	95-92
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	110-90
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	109-89
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	99-91
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	102-88
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	95-93
2008	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	109-90
2009	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	104-99
2010	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	112-89

Current match score: Cambridge 26, Oxford 10

Appendix D – Millipedes versus Alligators Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1987	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	82-73
1988	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alligators	83½-72½
1989	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	91-66
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	88-68
1991	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alligators	88-67
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alligators	86-67
1993	Iffley Road, Oxford	Tie	88-88
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	104-72
1995	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Millipedes	100-78
1996	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	107-69
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alligators	105-74
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	106-71
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Millipedes	98-80
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	96-83
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alligators	106-69
2002	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alligators	96-83
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alligators	114½-62½
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	109-87
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alligators	105-92
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	105-94
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alligators	114-84
2008	Iffley Road, Oxford	Millipedes	98-96
2009	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Alligators	114-89
2010	Iffley Road, Oxford	Alligators	122-76

Current match score: Millipedes 12, Alligators 11 with 1 tie.

Appendix E – Inter-University Relays Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1920	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-1
1921	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-1
1922	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Oxford	3-2
1923	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-1
1924	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	3-2
1925	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-1
1926	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1927	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1928	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1929	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	6-1
1930	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1931	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1932	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1933	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4½-2½
1934	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	6-1
1935	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	6-1
1936	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Oxford	5-2
1937	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1938	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Oxford	5-2

1939-1945: No Matches due to World War Two

1946	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1947	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1948	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5½-1½
1949	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1950	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
1951	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1952	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-2
1953	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1954	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-1
1955	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1956	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
1957	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1958	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
1959	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1960	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1961	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1962	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	6-1
1963	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1964	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1966	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	5-2
1966	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
1967	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2

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Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1968	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1969	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1970	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1971	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	6-1
1973 ⁱ	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-2
1974	Crystal Palace	Oxford	6-1
1975	Crystal Palace	Oxford	5-2
1976	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-3
1977	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-3
1978	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-3
1979	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	5-2
1980	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-3
1981	Crystal Palace	Oxford	5-2
1982	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	7-0
1983	Norman Park, Bromley	Cambridge	5-2
1984	Crystal Palace	Oxford	6-1
1985	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-3
1986	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	6-1
1987	Harlow Arena	Oxford	4-3
1988	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	6-1
1989	Bedford Athletic Stadium	Cambridge	6-1
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1991	Bedford Athletic Stadium	Cambridge	5-2
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1993 ⁱⁱ	Bedford Athletic Stadium	Oxford	5-2
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1995	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	6-1
1996 ⁱⁱⁱ	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-1
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
2000	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	6-1
2001	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
2002	West Suffolk Athletics Arena, Bury St. Edmunds	Oxford	6-1
2003	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
2004	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
2005	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-1
2006	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	6-1
2007	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
2008	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	4-2
2009	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	6-0
2010	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	4-2

Current match score: Cambridge 44, Oxford 39

Appendix F – Inter-University Field Events Match Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1954	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1955	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1956	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1957	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1958	Fenner's Ground, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1959	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
1960	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1961	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1962	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	7-0
1963	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1964	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-3
1965	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	7-0
1966	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1967	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1968	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1969	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1970	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	6-1
1971	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1972	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1973	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1974	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1975	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	7-0
1976	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-1
1977	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-3
1979	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1980	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-2
1981	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1982	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	3-2
1983	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1984	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1985	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-3
1986	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-0
1987	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-3
1988	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-3
1989	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-2
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-3
1991	Milton Road, Cambridge	Tie	4-4
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5½-2½
1993 ⁱ	Milton Road, Cambridge & Bedford Athletic Stadium	Oxford	8-0
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-2
1995	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-2
1996 ⁱⁱ	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-3
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-3

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Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-2
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	5-3
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-3
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	6-2
2002	West Suffolk Athletics Arena, Bury St. Edmunds	Tie	4-4
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-3
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-3
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	6-2
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-2
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	5-3
2008	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	7-1
2009	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	6-2
2010	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Tie	4-4

Current match score: Oxford 30, Cambridge 23 with 3 ties

Appendix G – Ladies’ Inter-University Relays Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1975	Crystal Palace	Oxford	3-0
1976	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	2-1
1977	Crystal Palace	Oxford	2-1
1978	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	2-1
1979	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	3-0
1980	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	3-0
1981	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	2-1
1982	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	3-0
1983	Norman Park, Bromley	Tie	2-2
1984	Crystal Palace	Oxford	4-0
1985	Crystal Palace	Cambridge	5-0
1986	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-1
1987	Harlow Arena	Cambridge	4-1
1988	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-1
1989	Bedford Athletic Stadium	Cambridge	3-2
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	3-2
1991	Bedford Athletic Stadium	Oxford	4-1
1992	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	3-2
1993 ⁱ	Bedford Athletic Stadium	Cambridge	4-1
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	3-2
1995	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	3-2
1996 ⁱⁱ	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-0
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Tie	3-3
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-1
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	5-1
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-2
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-2
2002	West Suffolk Athletics Arena, Bury St. Edmunds	Cambridge	4-2
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	4-2
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	4-2
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Tie	3-3
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-1
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	5-1
2008	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Oxford	5-1
2009	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Oxford	4-2
2010	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	5-1

Current match score: Cambridge 18, Oxford 15 with 3 ties

Appendix H – Ladies’ Inter-University Field Events Match Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1984	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	3-1
1985	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	3-2
1986	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	4-0
1987	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-1
1988	Milton Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-0
1989	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	3-2
1990	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	3-2
1991	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	3-2
1992	Milton Road, Cambridge	Oxford	3-2
1993 ⁱ	Milton Road, Cambridge & Bedford Athletic Stadium	Oxford	6-1
1994	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	6-0
1995	Iffley Road, Oxford	Oxford	5-2
1996 ⁱⁱ	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-2
1997	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	7-0
1998	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	4-3
1999	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Oxford	5-2
2000	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	6-1
2001	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	6-1
2002	West Suffolk Athletics Arena, Bury St. Edmunds	Cambridge	4-3
2003	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-3
2004	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-3
2005	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Cambridge	5-3
2006	Iffley Road, Oxford	Cambridge	5-3
2007	Wilberforce Road, Cambridge	Tie	4-4
2008	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Oxford	6-2
2009	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Tie	4-4
2010	Lee Valley Sports Centre, London	Cambridge	5-3

Current match score: Cambridge 16, Oxford 9 with 2 ties

Appendix I – Indoor Inter-University Sports Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1987	Haringey Indoor Track	Cambridge	34-32
1988	Haringey Indoor Track	Oxford	39-27

Match score: Cambridge 1, Oxford 1

Ladies' Indoor Inter-University Sports Record

Year	Venue	Winner	Result
1988	Haringey Indoor Track	Cambridge	30½-24½

Match score: Cambridge won the only contest

Endnotes

Chapter 1

ⁱ Montague Shearman (St John's) won the 'Varsity Sports 100 yards in 1876, the same year he became British Champion at this event. In 1879, he was elected O.U.A.C. President. In 1880 he won the national title at 440 yards.

Chapter 2

ⁱ Later Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge.

ⁱⁱ Later 1st Viscount Alverstone - the eponym for the Cambridge second team.

ⁱⁱⁱ Now the site of the Said Business School.

^{iv} Goodwin was also the first President of the Oxford University Hare and Hounds Club.

^v Note the O.U.A.C. scribble etched onto the wall in the top left corner.

^{vi} William Woodcock Hough (Corpus Christi) was also the founder of the Cambridge University Hare and Hounds in 1880.

^{vii} The track referred to here was O.U.A.C.'s ground at Marston, which was laid down under the direction of John Chambers (Trinity, Cambridge) in 1867. The construction took less than two months and it was first used for the Lincoln College Sports in that year. It was one-third of a mile in length and was reported to have sharpish corners; however, it was always dogged by the problem of being built on heavy clay and was, thus, prone to flooding or becoming so soggy that it was unusable. Therefore, in 1876, O.U.A.C. decided to relocate to the Iffley Road site that is still used today.

^{viii} In *First Four Minutes*.

Chapter 3

ⁱ Algernon Estcourt Cator (Keble) was another exceptional middle distance runner at Oxford, during this period. Cator was first employed as an "also-ran" or pace-maker in the mile and three miles before establishing himself as a fine racer in his own right.

ⁱⁱ Cornwallis' record stood for 30 years until 1934 when it was broken by the Olympian, Pen Hallowell (Balliol and United States) who lowered the record to 1:54.2.

ⁱⁱⁱ This impressive double has since been achieved by a small number of distinguished athletes. A.G.K. Brown (Peterhouse), the 400m silver medallist in the Berlin Olympics won the Varsity 440 yards for four years in succession from 1935 to 1938, twice revising the 'Varsity record (49.0s in 1935 and 48.4s in 1937), combining this with a win in the 100 yards in 1937 and with victory in the 880 yards in 1938.

Derek Johnson (Lincoln) won the 440 yard and 880 yard double in 1954, 1955 and 1956, each time improving the 'Varsity 880 yard record (1:53.1; 1:52.5; and 1:51.9 respectively) before moving up to win the mile in 1957. Johnson also won Olympic silver in the 800 metres in Melbourne.

^{iv} Taber ran for Oxford in the 1913 'Varsity Cross-Country at Roehampton (finishing second) and the 1914 'Varsity Sports (finishing second in the half-mile).

Chapter 4

ⁱ Conjuring up images of *Chariots of Fire*.

ⁱⁱ Presumably used by O.U.A.C. at that time.

ⁱⁱⁱ Should be F.J.K. Cross.

Chapter 5

ⁱ While in America, plans were formulated for the visit of Cornell in December to face a combined Oxbridge side in a cross-country race over the Thames Hare and Hounds' course at Roehampton.

ⁱⁱ Frederick Edwin Smith (Wadham, and later, Merton).

Chapter 6

ⁱ Formerly the home of the London Athletic Club and, since 1905, home to Chelsea F.C..

ⁱⁱ Son of Charles Pumphrey (Christ's) who ran for Cambridge at the turn of the 20th century and won the 1899 and 1900 'Varsity Cross-Country Races.

ⁱⁱⁱ Now British Universities' and Colleges' Sport (BUCS).

^{iv} The full version of the transcribed commentary can be found in McNeish's fictional biography, *Lovelock*.

^v Roger Robinson. "Lovelock, John Edward 1910 – 1949". Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, updated 30 September 2002 www.dnzb.govt.nz/.

^{vi} The results of the wartime matches can be found in Appendix A.

Chapter 7

ⁱ Eric Mackay (Wadham).

ⁱⁱ This is the more plausible reason for the name, rather than that suggested by Paul Willcox, the Secretary of Achilles, from the piece of doggerel brought to athletic fame by Geoff Dyson, the first Chief National Coach:

"The centipede was happy quite
Until a toad in fun,
Said, "Pray which leg goes after which?"
She lay distracted in a ditch,
Considering how to run."

However, this may well describe the athletic antics of some members of the club.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is not a reference to Harold Wilson (Jesus) who had, however, a reputation as a credible quarter-miler. According to the *Daily Telegraph*, "A good athlete, Wilson was an outstanding quarter-miler and would doubtless have won a Blue had he not given it up for work."

^{iv} Mallalien's report of the 1953 'Varsity Sports can be found under the heading of *Runners and Jumpers* in his *Sporting Days* published by the Sportsman's Book Club in 1957.

^v Ibbotson spent a considerable proportion of his running career carrying out National Service in the RAF, and as such, was little more than a full time athlete.

Chapter 8

ⁱ The second team match had previously been held on a weekend close to the Blues 'Varsity match, usually the immediate following weekend.

ⁱⁱ The White City remained open as a venue for greyhound racing. In 1976, the athletics track was replaced by one for speedway and the stadium became the home for the sports major events and for the White City Rebels team, who had ironically relocated to the venue from Oxford. After the demise of the team in 1979, the stadium remained in use for major speedway events and greyhound racing until it was sold by its owners, the Greyhound Racing Association, to the B.B.C. in 1984. It was demolished in 1985, the first former Olympic stadium to suffer that fate.

ⁱⁱⁱ The 'Varsity Match took place at Iffley Road every year from 1977 until 1994. However, with the opening of the new Wilberforce Road at Cambridge, the event has alternated between the two since 1995.

^{iv} Sanders still leads the O.U.A.C. all-time rankings for discus

^v The eight events were: The Inter-‘Varsity Athletic Sports; Centipedes versus Alverstone; the Inter-‘Varsity Relays’ the Inter-‘Varsity Field Events; the Inter-‘Varsity Cross-Country Race; Tortoises versus Spartans; IIIrd Team Cross-Country Race; and IVth Team Cross-Country Race.

^{vi} This is not true. There was no Vth cross-country team until 1966. The O.U.A.C. Cross-Country captain, John Bryant (Queen’s) lightheartedly appointed Archer captain of the Vth, despite its not existing.

Chapter 9

ⁱ Now the site of Fletcher Field, the university’s all-weather pitch.

ⁱⁱ Subsequently, the ladies’ second team match – Millipedes versus Alligators – was added in 1987.

ⁱⁱⁱ 1977, 1990, 1991, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.

^{iv} Now Ellen Leggate. She went on to represent Cambridge (Peterhouse) from 2001-04.

^v Now B.U.C.S.

^{vi} Presumably the inspiration for the title of Ian’s autobiography, following C.B.Fry’s own book, *Life Worth Living*.

^{vii} Liz Hobson (Queen’s).

Chapter 10

ⁱ Now Loughborough University.

ⁱ Scoring was by event from 1864 to 1937.

ⁱⁱ In 1938, points scoring (5,3,1) was introduced.

ⁱⁱⁱ First match held in March 1940, second match in May 1940.

^{iv} From 1969 to the present day, the points scoring has been 5,3,2,1.

Appendix B

ⁱ Since 1971, the Centipedes-Alverstone Match has been held in conjunction with the Blues Match.

Appendix E

ⁱ The timing of the Relays Match changed from November to February/March in the 1972-73 season, hence there was no event in the calendar year of 1972.

ⁱⁱ Held over two days (February 28th and March 6th).

ⁱⁱⁱ Since 1996, the Relays and Field Events Match have been held concurrently.

Appendix F

ⁱ The discus and hammer were held at Cambridge; and the high jump, pole vault, long jump, triple jump, shot put and javelin were held at Bedford.

ⁱⁱ Since 1996, the Relays and Field Events Match have been held concurrently.

Appendix G

ⁱⁱ Held over two days (February 28th and March 6th).

ⁱⁱ Since 1996, the Relays and Field Events Match have been held concurrently.

Appendix H

ⁱ The discus and hammer were held at Cambridge; and the high jump, pole vault, long jump, triple jump, shot put and javelin were held at Bedford.

ⁱⁱ Since 1996, the Relays and Field Events Match have been held concurrently.