



OXFORD UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC CLUB

Michaelmas Alumni Newsletter



New Vice-President: Lesley Bryant

By Catherine Gallagher, president

OUAC would like to extend a massive congratulations to our new Honorary Vice-President, as voted for at a recent EGM, Lesley Bryant.

Many of you will know Lesley as the club's throws coach and massage therapist. She has worked with us as a massage therapist since 2007, and as a coach since 2014. The dedication she has shown for her athletes and for the club has been second to none, and we think it is fitting that she should accept this honour, to go some way to thank her for everything she has done for the club.

We wish her all the best in her future endeavours, particularly any athletic-related, as she moves to Devon to be with family.



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Michaelmas Competitions

By Catherine Gallagher, president

This year, OUAC put on a Michaelmas coppers like it has never been seen before. Scarred by the poor conditions of previous years, we decided to try a new format of event, labelled it 'Michaelmas Multis'. This gave all athletes the opportunity to try out new events that they hadn't do before (or in many cases since they were children!), including long jump, high jump, shot put, discus and 100m. We had an excellent turn out with some very promising performances from the freshers, which the captains will use as selection for the freshers varsity match.

The Freshers' Varsity Match will be held in Cambridge this year, on Saturday 11th November. With some quality communication between Cambridge and Oxford, we have decided to mix up the event ever-so-slightly to make it a bit more fun for this year's newbies. In particular, for the first time in history we will be having a mixed 4x400, with two women and two men in each team. This event won't be one to miss, so get add it to your diaries and come down to Wilberforce Road this November!



OUAC 2024: what to expect

By Will Parry, men's captain

Following our victory at Varsity and FEAR last year, OUAC is looking to expand on this by continuing the winning streak with even more convincing triumphs over Cambridge, as the entire committee is working hard to ensure a 4-0 victory this coming year. The big change introduced for the season by the captains is introducing a much larger team for BUCS both indoors and outdoors, trying to achieve even more medals than last time out. Retaining many of the athletes from our 4x400m success means there is a strong belief of even greater heights being reached.

The club is currently recruiting athletes for Fresher's Varsity, holding a new type of Michaelmas Cuppers- a much more relaxed, sports day type event, to encourage those new to the sport and make the prospect of competing less intimidating. Building off the success of this event, the captains plan on putting out large numbers of athletes to the Fresher's Varsity Match, whether they are competing or guesting, to help inspire a passion for newer athletes to potentially lead the club in future years. There is also a big push to get as many members as possible to warm weather training, and help instil a togetherness and teamwork that will lead the club to a massively enjoyable and successful season.





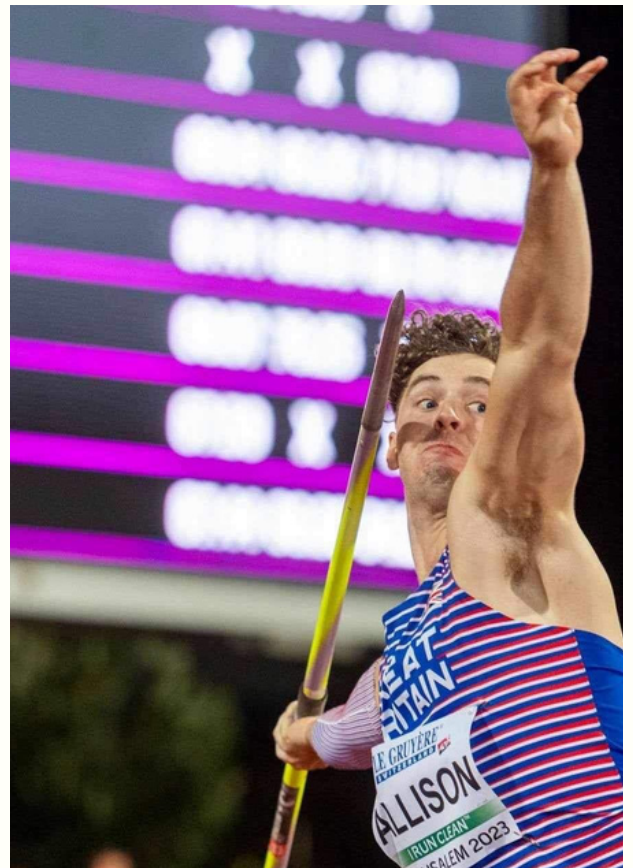
Summer Success

by Ella Fryer and James McCulloch, Vice Captains



While most Oxford students were at home relaxing during the long vac, members of OUAC were – of course – tearing up the track or the field. Alex Shipley had already had a hugely successful season, after a silver medal in the 1500m at the BUCS indoor championships and a further silver at the outdoor championships in the 2000m steeplechase, in which she also broke the OUAC record. A further record fell to her at the Transatlantic Tour, where she broke the 5000m Harvard-Yale match record. Following the end of term, she continued her winning streak with a win in the mile at home during the Achilles match against Penn-Cornell. In August, she was selected to represent England in the Home Countries International 5K in Cardiff, where she came 6th with a PB of 16:09.

The taste of summer success was also felt by the men’s team. Maranga Mokaya’s talent at the 400 hurdles has shown no sign of abatement; he was able to better his 4th place at last year’s national championships with an impressive bronze medal at this year’s iteration. With a time of 50.32, this was at the time his second quickest time ever after the 50.24 at Meeting Meilen in Switzerland earlier in the season. But this was bettered further with a tantalising 50.05 at the Motonet GP in Tampere, Finland, in August. Javelin thrower Michael Allison was also performing well on the European circuit. A silver at the senior British championships and a definitive gold at the U20 English championships (with a PB throw of 76.97m) easily earned him a place on the GB team for the European U20 Championships in Jerusalem, where he earned bronze. We certainly can’t wait to see what these talented athletes get up to next season!



OUTREACH INITIATIVES

As you will have read in our last newsletter, OUAC are putting on an ‘Athlete Taster Day,’ open to Year 10s - Year 12s throughout the UK. The sign-ups are now closed, for which we received an unprecedented amount of interest, with more demand than places.

This event will happen on November 16th, and keep an eye out for our Christmas issue of this newsletter for a summary of the day. We can’t wait to invite the students into the Oxford world for the day, and we would like to extend a big thank you to Magdalen college for supporting us in this venture.

Iffley Festival of Miles 2024

To mark 70 years since Roger Bannister's historic sub-four minute mile, OUAC and OUCCC will be hosting a series of exciting events over the course of the first bank holiday weekend in May. To kick things off, there will be an alumni garden party on the Sunday afternoon, 5th May, at Merton College where Bannister was a scholar and subsequently an Honorary Fellow. This will include a photo of current and past Club Captains and Presidents. Look out for more information on buying tickets for this in mid-November.

The festivities will continue with The Iffley Festival of Miles on Monday 6th May, the day of the anniversary itself. There will be something for all the family, with food, drinks and mile races for para-athletes, the general public and elite men and women. Amongst this all we are pleased to announce that the club will be presented with a World Athletics plaque. This is to commemorate our extensive history, and contributions to the national and international athletics communities.

Please save the date and encourage any OUAC friends you are in touch with to do so too. We look forward to welcoming you back to Iffley Road!





OUAC Coaching 2023/4

By Sammy Baker-Jones, Secretary and Multi-events athlete



Middle distance coach, Matt Seddon

OUAC has come a long way over the past decade, so that we can finally boast professional coaches in every single event. Our coaching set-up is something we are very proud of as many universities have just one general coach, or no coach at all. Each of our eight training squad groups led by a head coach, with the support of assistant coaches within certain groups. Without a doubt, the successes we saw last year can be attributed to the hard work and commitment our coaches do for the club, and so, as there has been growth and changes, here's a rundown of the 2023-2024 OUAC Coaching Squad.

Throws:

At the beginning of the 2023 academic year, we saw Lesley Bryant, head throws coach since 2014, step down from her role to spend more time with family, and so we welcomed Bob Broadbridge as the new OUAC throws coach. Bob has been our Hammer throws coach for the last two years, and specialises in heavy throws coaching, being the lead Hammer coach on the National YDP programme. Bob now trains our throwers two-to-three times a week, with sessions being run at both Iffley and Horspath athletics tracks. We look forward to seeing what Bob and his throwers will achieve this year!

New to MT 2023, Javelin masterclasses will be taking place twice termly with a visiting coach to provide an opportunity for technical coaching to athletes who cannot commit to regular training. Alongside this, Jesse Schelfhout, a 2nd year Physics DPhil student from Australia who specialises in Javelin, has been running the javelin sessions weekly. With a personal record of 71m, Jesse is a very accomplished athlete himself, currently rehabilitating following surgery, and so has dedicated his time and energy towards helping his fellow Javelin throwers. We hope to see him represent the club at some point in the future and thank him for his continued support.

Pole Vault:

Ian Marriott has been coaching OUAC Pole Vaulters for multiple years, with training taking place at Horspath athletics track two times a week alongside his group at Oxford City AC. Also new to MT 2023, Pole Vault masterclasses are being run at Iffley, with sessions aimed at providing an opportunity for new athletes to try out pole vault under the guidance of coach Ian. The first masterclass has already taken place on 15th October, which had good attendance, and more sessions are planned to run, two or three scheduled a term, hopefully increasing pole vault participation and performance in competitions this year!



Long Sprints:

Last year Michael Coker joined OUAC as our coach for the long sprints group. Michael has been coaching for over 25 years, with a focus on 400/400H, and has himself been a world masters champion in both the 110 and 400 hurdles. He now runs sessions at Iffley one-to-two times per week and provides training plans for drills and hill work when he is not present. We look forward to another year where we hopefully achieve even more success in long sprints!

Short Sprints:

Emma Hooper has been coaching sprints at OUAC since 2015, and now focuses on the short sprints with a substantial group of athletes. As a UKA Level 3 coach and previous 100m Varsity record holder, Emma has significant knowledge of the sprints. She sets and supervises a series of sessions at the track two-to-three times weekly, as well as working with the squad to plan their other drill, circuit and hill sessions. We hope to see even more success in our short sprinters this year!

Alongside Emma, OUAC has multiple assistant coaches who help support training and run the development sprints squad. The dev squad is for anyone who is new to the sport, returning to athletics or wants to take training less seriously, and has sessions twice a week coached by Justin Leung, Martha Stevens and Richard Kirkham.

Hurdles:

Kay Reynolds has coached sprints and hurdles for over 25 years, and has been the OUAC hurdles coach for many years now. Kay is a UKA Level 3 coach and had raced 100m/100H very competitively up until she stopped at age 42 due to injury. Kay now trains athletes once a week at Iffley, mainly focussing on the sprint hurdle events, and is heavily involved in running and officiating many competitions for OUAC and beyond.

Horizontal Jumps:

Dan Hooker has been coaching long and triple jump at OUAC for almost 10 years, first starting in 2014. As a former OUAC captain, and having represented England at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in the T37 100m, Dan has much personal experience in the jumps and sprints. He now provides technical training to OUAC athletes at Iffley one-to-two times per week, also holding some sessions at Brunel University track where he also coaches, and creates session plans for drill and sprint training for when he is not in Oxford.



Jumps coach, Dan Hooker

High Jump

High jump training within OUAC has undergone changes over the last few years, with Jen Cottrill our official coach, but often in Canada for family commitments. As of MT 2023, Michael is coaching the group over the winter running technical sessions one-to-two times a week, and Jen will resume training as we move to summer when she returns from Canada.

Middle Distance:

Matt Seddon is the middle and long-distance coach for OUAC runners. He coaches sessions three-to-four times a week either at Iffley track, Exeter-Hertfield playing fields or South/Uni Parks, and has a significant group of athletes ranging from highly competitive to more casual runners. Starting MT 2023, Matt will be supported by assistant coach Jack Halsey for two sessions a week.



SAVE THE DATE

This year, OUAC have many exciting events on which alumni are both welcome and actively encouraged to come along to. I am delighted to confirm here, the dates of Freshers' Varsity Match, VFEAR, OUAC annual dinner, Iffley Festival of Miles and our biggest alumni event in years, as well as of course the men's 149th and women's 49th varsity match in 2024.

Please do pencil these dates into your diary. We would particularly encourage you to come along to annual dinner where we will have an esteemed speaker (TBC), as well as the alumni garden party, for which you can expect tickets to become available, via this mailing list and our website, around mid-November.

I'd particularly like to draw your attention to the fact that the OUAC annual dinner date has changed from the previous issue of this newsletter.

11th November 2023 – Freshers' Varsity Match

10th February 2024 – VFEAR

1st March 2024 – OUAC Annual Dinner

5th May 2024 - Alumni garden party

6th May 2024 - Iffley festival of miles

18th May 2024 - Annual varsity match



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I am very proud of OUAC the place OUAC is in at the moment, with the Captains working hard already to ensure our varsity team in the summer will be in the best shape it can be to secure a 4-0 win, and the rest of the committee working overtime to ensure OUAC is running as well as it can. We hope that our outreach initiative will also secure the future of OUAC as a strong club,

while athletes have given back to their communities, with many of the schools we reached out to, being schools that our athletes themselves attended. It has been a pleasure to hear from alumni and athletes alike over the past few months; hearing about stories from your time in OUAC is enlightening! I look forward to seeing many of you at our events throughout the year, and look out for our next issue of this newsletter over the Christmas period.