



OXFORD UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC CLUB

Summer Alumni Newsletter



The 148th Annual Varsity Match

On 7th May 2023, 100 Oxford athletes jumped, threw and ran their hearts out at Wiberforce Road, Cambridge, and shoed the tabs. The Women's Blues, Men's Blues and Men's seconds took home three epic trophies and overflowing levels of pride. It was a day Isaac Rushworth, Sam Nelson and Phoebe Baggot, the then – president and captains, will never forget, as they led their teams to victory.

There were some truly sensational performances that day, not least from Maranga Mokaya – who will become a massively repeated name by the end of this newsletter, breaking the match record for the 400mh. Many other match records were also broken, including from Oxford's 4x400m team made up of Charlotte Buckley, Catherine Gallagher, Ella Fryer and Natalie Groves. They broke a 30 year old record to run a time of 3.54, following some recent BUCS success. There were too many excellent performances to mention here, but head over to our website to see some extensive match reports written by our new vice captains, and find out all about the successes of that day.

On home turf next summer, the Oxford side will be stronger than ever. With lots of behind-the-scenes work already underway to secure that 4-0 victory, the tabs are going to have to be top of their game if they want to stand a fighting chance!

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Transatlantic Tour

By Ella Fryer, Vice Captain

Following multiple years of postponements due to the pandemic, the Transatlantic series made its much-awaited return this year, kicking off with a combined Oxford-Cambridge Achilles team travelling to the US over Easter. During the tour we stayed at Harvard, Yale, Penn and Cornell, where the ethos and tradition of the tour dictated that we were hosted in the rooms of the American athletes, giving us insight into their day to day lives as well as, importantly, access to their all-you-can-eat buffet dining halls.



At each university we also had the opportunity to make the most of their high-quality facilities- from indoor tracks to recovery rooms containing numerous types of hot and cold baths- on top of exploring their campuses and surrounding areas. Despite strong performances from the Achilles contingent, the Americans came out on top at both the Harvard-Yale and Penn-Cornell matches, though given the frequently questionable sleeping arrangements, and the fact some of our opponents went on to become NCAA champions and finalists just weeks later, the losses were not to be dismissed.

It was then only a handful of months before we returned the favour of hosting the Americans in England, starting with the Penn-Cornell team, and followed by Harvard-Yale a week later. Although their stays in Oxford were brief, it was just enough time for them to be toured around the city, go to Vinnies and cause carnage whilst punting (with one group managing to sink a punt). Unlike in the US, these matches were much closer fought with the men's matches coming down to the relays on both occasions, although in both the visitors were the ones to emerge victorious. Regardless of this, the matches allowed us to catch up with our hosts from Easter, carry out a final few kit swaps, and were an opportunity for some high-quality competition at the end of the university athletics calendar.



13 AUGUST 2023



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BUCS Success 2023

The British Universities and Colleges athletics championships are always a highlight of the OUAC calendar. This year, though, was particularly special.

Jake Watson won silver in pole vault. Michael Allison won silver in javelin. Alex Shipley won silver in the 2000m and ran an OUAC record. Maranga Mokaya, Sam Nelson, Ryan Cherian, Marco Siniscalchi, Adam Coates and Isaac Rushworth all won bronze in the men's 4x400m relay. Natalie Groves, Ella Fryer, Charlotte Buckley, Samantha Baker-Jones and Catherine Gallagher all won bronze in the women's 4x400m relay, and ran an OUAC record more than two seconds quicker than the previous mark.



That is, 14 Oxford athletes won medals at the BUCS championships. Two all-time OUAC records were obliterated. Oxford came top 10 overall, an extremely rare and high placing for Oxford in recent years. It is no surprise that one week later we were victorious at Varsity. Oxford experienced unprecedented yet deserved success, and the strength and depth of our team is projected to only increase over the coming years, with many of those winning medals just freshers with years to come in OUAC.

Oxford athletes really proved themselves on the national stage this year, showing that we are one of the most competitive university teams in the country. After this year's success, we plan to put even more emphasis on BUCS next year, with the aim of taking home more medals, finishing ever-higher on the overall league table, and inspiring our less experienced athletes to take athletics more seriously and contribute to the ever-expanding depth of our team. It is with great pride that we can go on a national stage, and wear our iconic dark blue.



OUAC LINKEDIN

This is what it says on the tin really! OUAC have created a LinkedIn page, so please do go and give us a follow! We will be posting regular updates about all-things OUAC,

so it should be a great way with you to stay up-to-date between Newsletters and alumni events. Just search Oxford University Athletic Club on LinkedIn and get involved.

National and International Success

This year has been one of renowned success for two of our athletes. Those athletes are Michael Allison and Maranga Mokaya.

Michael Allison is a fresher Physics student by day, and GB javelin thrower by night. He has gone from success to success this year, racking up silverware on his way. His first national victory came with his silver medal at BUCS, with a massive throw of 70.53m. He started as he meant to go on, then taking silver at the senior British Championships, and gold at the English u20 national championships, with a throw and enormous PB of 76.97m.



This automatically qualified him for the European u20 championships, where he won a bronze medal for Great Britain, the first British abled-bodied javelin medal at a major championships to be won in 15 years. This is an absolutely astonishing achievement, and we cannot wait to see what he has to come in the next few years. With wins in Varsity and FEAR too, we can rest assured he'll be getting us all the points in javelin against the tabs for years to come.

Maranga Mokaya is another one of our stars on the track. He specialises in the 400m, despite being one of Oxford's best athletes in many events including high jump, triple jump and the flat 400m. Maranga ran a new personal best time in the 400m this season, of an impressive 47.07 seconds, but his 400h time is rapidly catching up to this! His most recent personal best (after running one most races this season) is 50.05, so it is just a matter of time before he dips under that 50 second barrier. It is times like this, that won him a bronze medal at the senior British Championships this year. He also anchored Oxford's 4x400m team at BUCS this year, taking them from 4th and about 20m behind third, to a photo-finish third place. This truly was a spectacle to watch, Maranga always says that he loves a chase on that anchor leg, but it certainly was nail-biting to watch! As is the theme of OUAC this year, Maranga is only improving, and no doubt that bronze medal will turn into silver and gold over coming years, with international vests very much in the pipeline.



OUAC Outreach Initiatives

By Catherine Gallagher, President

Outreach is becoming more and more at the forefront of priorities for Oxbridge, as the universities recognise the disparity in opportunity for students from more or less fortunate backgrounds. Here at OUAC, we feel it is our responsibility to aid in this push to increase access to the universities, and feel we can extend this to athletics too. I myself was encouraged to apply to Oxford thanks to an access and outreach scheme run by my college (Corpus Christi). I came down to Oxford to experience a 'Tutorial Taster Day' and otherwise may not be here writing this!



This inspired me to take on a subject ambassador role in my college, where I often attended Q&As with prospective students. Whenever they asked 'what do you do outside of academia,' I would say: 'OUAC'.

It is this that inspired me to take two big passions of mine; outreach and athletics, and merge them together! Along with the help of our previous president Isaac, who was also very passionate about outreach, we have put together an 'Athlete Taster Day'. We are inviting school students from years 10-13 to come and spend the day in Oxford, hosted by Magdalen College. They will have the opportunity to tour the college, have talks on life as a student-athlete at Oxford as well as the admissions process, and then have a tour of Iffley Road Sports Centre including the Sir Roger Bannister track.

This event is already proving wildly popular, with more sign-ups than we have places. We hope that this can act as a catalyst for applications to Oxford from students from a diverse range of backgrounds with high athletic ability. Not only will this act as a small step in the right direction for improving access to Oxbridge for those from less fortunate backgrounds, but should in the long run also increase the already growing strength and depth we have, here at OUAC. This event is welcome to all and applications open until 26th October, so if you are aware of any students who may be interested, please do point them in the right direction. Students can apply via our Instagram.





SAVE THE DATE

2024 will mark the 70th anniversary of Roger Bannister becoming the first person ever to break the 4-minute mile. He broke this record on 6th May, 1954. Hence our Iffley Festival of Miles event that we are holding this year, is going to be bigger and better than ever. Although we can't reveal yet what is being planned, this weekend is absolutely not one to miss. Our alumni event on Sunday 5th will be the biggest event held for years, and as such we would strongly encourage you to keep this date free. Keep an eye out for more updates to come on this!



16th February – OUAC Annual Dinner

5th May – Alumni garden party and dinner (details TBC)

6th May – Iffley Festival of Miles

Expression of Gratitude

As a student-led club, OUAC has always relied heavily on the generosity of alumni, in the form of donations. There is no doubt that alumni donations have massively contributed to the successes of OUAC in the past year, allowing us to access world-class coaching and equipment; especially with the recent professionalisation of coaching. We would like to thank the following 1860 club members and others, for their generous donations over recent months:



Adam McBraida	Caspar L L. Eliot	Helen G. Hanstock	Philip H. Weaver	John P. Crosse
Alan P. Chetwynd	Christopher J. Brownlees	Hugh S. Baker	Sally E. Hughes	William H. Robbins
Alexander Kozlov	Daniel Hooker	Matthew K. Elliott	Stuart M. Veale	Peter A. Clarkson
Alexander Rahaman	Hamish R. Magoffin	Michael M. Hogan	Thomas Pound	Jon R. Bowles
Alice M. Harray		Paul M. Temporal	William A. Cummings	Antony C. Harris

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. It is a pleasure to take on the presidency this year, and I would love to hear from you with any stories or anecdotes you have from your time here,

and I can certainly include these in the next issue or the history of the club. I look forward to hearing from many of you, and seeing you at our events throughout this next year.