

# Achilles Club 1998 Annual Report

## Summary

There is more material to be included in this Report than ever before, a sure sign that all is well with the Club. During 1998 we welcomed a team from Penn and Comell, toured Guernsey, gave the Combined Services a run for their money, enjoyed an Achilles Dinner in the summer and a Ball in the winter, and Oxford relay runners held an outstanding reunion, an account of which is contained herein.

1999 promises even more: the old rivalry is renewed with Harvard and Yale, Sydney University are planning to pay us a return visit which will stir the memories of members on our 1978 tour to Australia, and the highlight will be a match in Tokyo against Waseda University, a return fixture which is finally coming to fruition after 71 years!

Achilles Medals for 1997 were awarded to **Richard Nerurkar** (marathon 2:08:36) and **James Brierley** (high jump 2.20m)

**Mara Myers** won the English National Cross Country, following in the footsteps of **Nnenna Lynch** (subsequently stripped of the title on a technicality because OUAC had forgotten to register their overseas members), and of our most recent winners of the men's' race, **Richard Nerurkar** and (famously by a record margin of about 1 ½ minutes in 1981) **Julian Goater**. After placing 4th in the AAA 10,000m, she is now living in Japan, and will be working from September 1999 at the British Embassy in Tokyo.

**Ruth Irving** placed 7th in the long jump at the AAA Championships, **Clare Ridgley** 9th in the pole vault, **Mara Myers** 10th in the 5000m (and 4th at 10000m as above), and **Jon Hilton** 11th in the triple jump. At 800m, **Kheredine Idessane** and **Ellen O'Hare** went out in the heats.

**Chris Cheeseman** placed 3rd in the National 20k Walk, and 2nd in the English Commonwealth Games Trials at 50k.

**Nnenna Lynch** placed 4th in the US Championships at 5000m.

**Katie Skorupska** and **Ruth Irving** won Scottish titles at 5000m and long jump respectively, while **John Moreland** added to his extensive tally of Northern Ireland discus titles.

At the British Universities Championships, **Clare Ridgley** won the pole vault, adding 1 cm to her championship best with 3.45. **Pierre Faber** had a busy weekend, collecting 2nd in the discus, 3rd in the high jump and the shot, and 5th in the javelin. Other second places were achieved by **Dan Leggate** in the 5000m, **Matthew Buck** in the pole vault, **Ellen O'Hare** at 1500m, and **Katie Skorupska** (just two hundredths away from first) at 10,000m. Third placers were **Catherine Saint-Louis** at 800m, and **Clare Martin** breaking new ground in the women's 2000m steeplechase.

**Sian (Pilling)** (Oxford) and **Paddy Brice** (Cambridge) have staked their claim to theirs having been the first Achilles inter-university wedding, predating that of **Chris Cholerton** (Oxford) and **Gill Howard** (Cambridge) reported last year. They have both turned to the Triathlon, and Sian is now one of the country's leading triathletes.

**Steph Forrester** is another top flight triathlete with serious Olympic ambitions.

Congratulations to **Joanna Latimer** on her wedding in April 1997. She is currently working in Australia for the organisers of the 2000 Olympics.

## VETERANS

**John Moreland** led the M40 discus rankings. **Chris Melliush** improved his British M50 hammer record to 54.51, and retained his BVAFA title. **Hazel Barker** was 2nd in the British W35 Heptathlon Championships, and was 3rd in the high jump rankings. **Julian Goater** was second M45 in the World Duathlon Championships in Germany. **Steve James** heads the M60 road-running rankings up to and including 10miles, and has set a British M60 record for 10k of 33.29. **Bruce Tulloh** heads the UK M6 Half Marathon rankings. **Joan Lasenb** won the European W35 10k Road Race title. **Max Jones** was 2nd M70 in the London Marathon (Max's idea of a short sprint). **Gordon Wilson** was injured for much of 1998, but earlier big results include 2nd M50 in New York in 1996, 5th M55 in London in 1997 (2:47:28), and 1st M55 in the Comrades in 1997 (89.9k in 7:04:29).

## UK ATHLETICS

**David Hemery** has been elected (from a shortlist which included **Mike Turner**) to replace caretaker **Chris Chataway** as chairman of the new national governing body. Much of the credit for the assisting David Moorcroft restructure the sport in this country must go **Allison O'Neill**, who took a sabbatical from her work with McKinsey to devote herself to the project.

## 1998 UK RANKINGS

2nd	<b>Chris Cheeseman</b>	50k walk	4:10:5 4
2nd	<b>Richard Nerurkar</b>	Marathon	2:14:0 2
5th	<b>Daniell Sanderson</b>	Marathon	on merit
6th	<b>Ruth Irving</b>	Long Jump	6.29
7th	<b>Chris Cheeseman</b>	20k walk	1:31:5 8
7th	<b>Pierre Faber</b>	Decathlon	7247
10th	<b>Clare Ridgley</b>	Pole Vault	3.60
12th	<b>Steve Garland</b>	Decathlon	6503
12th	<b>Katie Skorupska</b>	10,000	34:40. 00
14th	<b>Mara Myers</b>	10,000	34:53. 57
16th	<b>Mara Myers</b>	5,000	16:25. 50
18th	<b>Tom Richards</b>	Pole Vault	4.90
18th	<b>Rachel Jordan</b>	800	2:07.5 6
20th	<b>Matt Weaver</b>	Pole Vault	4.80
21st	<b>Judy Payne</b>	High Jump	1.76
22nd	<b>Ellen O'Hare</b>	1500	4:21.8 6
23rd	<b>Pierre Faber</b>	Shot	15.09
24th	<b>Katie Skorupska</b>	5,000	16.42. 87
27th	<b>John Moreland</b>	Discus	46.99
28th	<b>Jon Hilton</b>	Triple Jump	15.13
32nd	<b>Andy Hennessy</b>	3000 S'chase	9:07.6
32nd	<b>Pierre Faber</b>	Discus	46.64
32nd	<b>James Brierley</b>	High Jump	2.05
33rd	<b>Ellen O'Hare</b>	800	2:08.7
34th	<b>Anders Lustgarten</b>	400	47.52
36th	<b>Maggie McCutcheon</b>	Hammer	42.96
37th	<b>Esther Casson</b>	800	2:09.6
39th	<b>Bethan Page-Jones</b>	Triple Jump	11.31
40th	<b>Ewen Malloch</b>	3000 S'chase	9:12.6 6
40th	<b>Mara Myers</b>	1500	4:25.5 6
46th	<b>Huw Lobb</b>	3000 S'chase	9:15.0
48th	<b>Phil Cantrell</b>	Decathlon	5278
48th	<b>Mara Myers</b>	3000	9:39.9
50th	<b>Pierre Faber</b>	Pole Vault	4.40

Apologies to **Steve Garland**, whose name was omitted from the 1997 list: he was 17th in the Decathlon rankings (in 1998 he has improved to 12th), and placed 2nd in the BUSA championships.

## 124th VARSITY SPORTS

On a glorious day at Iffley Road, Oxford's men emerged somewhat fortunate victors in a closely contested match, while Cambridge's women were more clear-cut winners.

**Andrew Hennessy** produced emphatic wins in both the 3000m Steeplechase and the 1500m, and was awarded the **Drake Digby Trophy**. Other fine doubles were recorded by **Dave Gardiner** in the 100m and 200m (followed by a 48.8 relay leg), and **Pierre Faber**. Although prevented by injury from displaying his other decathlon skills, Pierre won the shot and discus: he was awarded the **Paul Gomme Trophy**, and his total of nine wins in individual events (shot and discus 1996-98, pole vault 1996 and 1997, high jump 1996) is a record over a 'normal' three year period and places him second only to **Dwayne Heard** (thirteen wins over seven years) in the history of the match (**Adrian Metcalfe** achieved 9 wins in 4 years, and **Ian Jackson** 9 wins in 7 years: **Jon Ridgeon** was prevented by injury from adding to 8 wins in only two years).

**Helen Ford-Dunn**, third last year, took over the mantle of **Fiona Rose** when stamping out any male challenge in the mens' 3000m walk.

**Ellen O'Hare** precisely equalled the 800m match record which she set last year, and was again awarded the **Susan Dennler Trophy**. She was pushed hard by **Esther Casson**, who went on to win the 400m for the third successive year. **Rebecca Lewis'** impact on the women's match has been even more emphatic than **Pierre Faber's** on the men's: she added another 4 wins to the 5 she recorded last year, and thus has equalled but in only 2 years **Emma Westlake's** total of 9 individual victories in Varsity Matches. **Clare Ridgley** demonstrated the desirability of the future inclusion in the official programme of the womens' pole vault by clearing 3.40 in an exhibition event, considerably higher, in the enforced absence of Pierre Faber, than any of the Oxford men.

Medals and trophies were presented by former British Record holder for 110m hurdles **Mike Parker**. Later in the evening at the Achilles Seniors Dinner at Trinity, courtesy once more of **Michael Beloff**, he regaled 85 or so members with reminiscences from behind the Iron Curtain, leaving them with a new appreciation of the term '*high hurdler*'. Enjoyable Blues and second team dinners were meanwhile being held at Wadham and Somerville respectively. The celebrations passed without incident, except that the **C.N. Jackson Trophy** again lost one of its oft repaired handles: the radical solution has been to remove handles completely!

## **THE 1998 GUERNSEY TOUR**

**A team of about 20 athletes, mainly current Oxford and Cambridge students but with a sprinkling of oldies competing and supporting, thoroughly enjoyed the friendly competition and fine weather in what was otherwise meteorologically a rather miserable summer.**

The match had been suggested by **Richard Paige** (if you have not visited and wondered at the Achilles website which Richard has set up you should do so – [www.achilles.org](http://www.achilles.org)), himself a Guernsey man, and the idea was enthusiastically endorsed by members who remembered Achilles' four former matches on the island in the 1953, 1954, 1955 and 1966. The contest was given a further boost when we were helping Penn/Cornell to arrange their itinerary in advance of their Match against Oxford/Cambridge and they welcomed the idea of joining us on Guernsey. The stage was set for the biggest athletic event on the island for 30 years.

Nor did it disappoint. In spite of the Americans' travel problems which resulted in most of their team arriving following a 3.00 a.m. start and a 5 hour ferry crossing just as the match was beginning, their athletes set 17 all-comers records. Achilles were by no means outclassed: **Tom Richards** and **Clare Ridgley** both set pole-vault all-comers records, **Dave Gardiner** got the better of the American team captain in both sprints, and by way of a warm-up for the 3000m, **Deborah Kay** was first woman home (11th overall) in the island's annual Half-Marathon, held earlier in the day. Other notable performances included **Rebecca Wright's** pb for 2nd in the 400m hurdles, and a 48.8 relay leg by **Nick Hamilton**, recovered from the illness which caused him dramatically to fall in the final yards of the Varsity Match 400m.

What brought the match alive, however, was the enthusiasm of our hosts, both competing and spectating, and the fine individual performances which the occasion helped Guernsey athletes to achieve. John Allen, Guernsey IAAC's President (and match organiser, starter, referee, etc!), presented us with the fruits of his research into our previous matches, programmes bearing such names as **Corrie Parkinson** and **Stinson** from the 50's, and **Hauck, Ronay** and **Johnston** from the 60's.

## **OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE v PENNSYLVANIA & CORNELL**

In spite of our teams' best efforts, under Dewi Roberts' determined direction, the strongest pairing in the Ivy League, having enjoyed the hospitality of OUAC organised by John De'Ath, proved their considerable worth.

## **ACHILLES v. COMBINED SERVICES v. WARWICKSHIRE**

**RAF COSFORD – 18 JULY 1998**

### **FROM MATT WEAVER**

**It's always a pleasure to compete in these matches – usually well organised and always well officiated and competitive – and this year was no exception.**

The Services are well known for attention to detail, but sadly the tortured soul who, in previous years, has been known to label the field events (honestly - the pole vault and the hammer look very similar from a distance) was not in attendance. The match is now to circulate between each of the three Services, and this year it was the turn of the RAF at Cosford.

The overall standard was lower than previous years, which suited us since it gave the men, at least, the opportunity to challenge for the lead, rather than fighting it out amongst the lesser places. In fact, the Men's team, fielding almost an entire squad, was neck and neck with the Combined Services for most of the afternoon. The women's team, with rather more gaps, made up for lack of numbers with a good show of enthusiasm.

Our male heavy throwers were out in force, but the first event of the day, the hammer, went to a strong Services pairing. **John Moreland** and **Pierre Faber** gained revenge with an excellent one-two in the discus. Pierre also threw over 14m to win the shot, despite a leg injury preventing him competing in other events. Other highlights in the field included a win for **Gareth Davies** in the triple jump following a close second in the long jump, and **Matt Weaver** gained a close victory in the pole vault, with **Richard Paige** gaining a nasty head wound after an ill conceived attempt to 'just do it for the point'. In the women's field events, there were Achilles wins through **Mary-Lisa Gibellato** and **Bethan Page-Jones** in the Long jump and Triple jump and a one-two in the (sadly non-scoring) Hammer by **Maggie McCutcheon** and **Rachel Stott**.

On the track, a win and a second place each for **Dave Gardiner** and **James Trapmore** in the sprints and middle distance respectively complimented an excellent win for **Nick Hamilton** in the 400m, who just dipped under the Blues time. Other Achilles wins were achieved by **Andy Barber** in the 5000m, and by a fit 4 x 400m relay squad with strong supporting roles being played by **Rob Osborne** (in nearly everything) and **Giles Clifford** (in that well known 1500m / 3000m steeplechase double). A good team spirit prevailed throughout the afternoon culminating in head to head in the 4 x 100m between the 'A' team (sprinters) and the 'B' team (mostly throwers), which the 'A' team narrowly won by about 50 yards. The track highlights for an under-strength Women's team were second places by **Sarah Hutchinson** in the 400m and **Mary-Lisa Gibellato** in the shorter hurdles.

I hope those of you who competed will agree that this is an excellent day out with a good standard of competition. If you are keen to compete next year (particularly if you are female), please don't wait to be

selected but contact the Team Managers, whose names and numbers are listed inside the front cover.

### ***Kinnaird and Sward***

**Achilles gave a good account of themselves, finishing third in the Kinnaird and sixth in the Sward.**

We are confident of being able to regain the trophies, hopefully as soon as 1999 when neither CUAC nor OUAC have fixtures the same day. As it was we did not depart entirely empty handed, as **Matt Lawson** carried off the cup for the winner of the 800m (he placed a good 2nd at 400m, too): that performance and **Dave Benton's** confident 3000m win were the highlights of a cold and damp afternoon.

Nevertheless it brought together a good cross-section of old-stagers, and **Peter Crawshaw**, **Christine Martin** and **John Herries** were among the spectators.

### **1998 VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY**

**Repeating his win of 1996, DAN LEGGATE of Cambridge won with apparent ease but could not stop Oxford taking the team honours.**

Competing in this event for the fifth year, former Scottish U20 champion Leggate bided his time prior to the notorious water splash through Beverley Brook as his captain **Dominic O'Brien** led the field in the early stages. O'Brien still held sway along the brookside path, through the woods and along the narrow confines of the Toastrack. Chasing him all the way was first year Oxford student **Jerome Brooks** with Leggate getting into his stride and beginning to close them down. In fourth place was **Nick Talbot**, fifth U20 in this year's National, but a gashed knee was later to cause problems.

Across the golf course O'Brien kept pole position as Leggate came up to Brooks' shoulder but soon all three ran together, stride for stride past the windmill, over the Alps and past the Kingsmere pond which signalled the half-way stage, where Oxford had the edge with four runners in the first six. Come four miles, O'Brien dropped off the pace. Brooks and Leggate eased away as one. With the race hitting the flatter terrain of Parkside, Leggate took control and through the Ravine and over the Butts prior to sweeping down to the finishing field, he went well clear of Brooks, looking full of running. O'Brien kept third as a limping Talbot placed fourth. Leggate - whose record in this race now reads third, third, first, second and first - unsurprisingly confessed to liking this course," but admitted he had problems holding Brooks on the hilly and muddy sections.

Recording only their second Varsity victory in seven years, the Dark Blues obviously benefited from the weekly training sessions under Harry Wilson. After 108 contests, Oxford and Cambridge are on level pegging with 54 wins apiece.

On a course containing more twists and turns than an Agatha Christie novel, the mystery for the spectators at the finish was: What happened to outright favourite **Katie Skorupska**? Winner here last year, junior international Skorupska appeared at ease as she hit the watersplash in fifth place just behind **Lucy Hassell**, **Esther Cannon**, **Emma Brooker** and **Ellen O'Hare**. Up through the woods Skorupska eased her way to the head of the file and Hassell, recovered from a fall in the watersplash, went second ahead of Brooker. Arriving at the Ravine just before the two mile mark, the field faced two sharp turns and, at the second, Skorupska, 10m clear, veered left instead of right. Hassell, who was second, said later: "I did call out but Katie didn't hear."

Hassell seized the initiative as she went on closely followed by her Oxford team-mate O'Hare with the first Cambridge scorer Brooker a clear third. Aware of 1997 European junior 1500m representative O'Hare having superior finishing speed, Hassell attacked the switchback known as The Butts with Vigour and went on to lead Oxford to their sixth consecutive win. A distraught Skorupska retraced her steps to come home in eighth place. Hassell, a modern pentathlon Blue who was only a reserve for this race last year, admitted afterwards: "It was hilly and muddy just as I like it." O'Hare was pleased to improve on her fifth place of last year, saying: "I improve four places each year." Brooker, a member of Shaftesbury Baret's winning National team admitted to "not feeling so good." - *Pete Mulholland's report for Athletics*

*Weekly.*

### **THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES**

**Tim Berrett** (Canada, 20k & 50k walk) placed 11th at 20k, but was concentrating more on the 50k. He was well in contention at 30k, in the bronze medal position and clear of the eventual winner. However, he was one of the three pre-race favourites who all succumbed to the heat and humidity, and dropped out after suffering badly for a while at about 40k. **Chris Cheeseman** (England, 50k walk) was delighted with his eighth place finish, and after going through a very bad patch around 35k, when he was caught by the back-markers, it was a tremendous achievement in punishing conditions to pull through and finish with renewed strength. 'Never again', he said .....but now he's been selected for the 1999 World Cup... **Daniell Sanderson** (England, Marathon: it is strange that all the Achilles athletes in KL were competing over long distances) was, like Chris, just pleased to finish in good shape, and 6th place was a fine achievement. Later the same day she was invited (one of very few to be singled out by name) to meet th

Queen at a small reception for noted competitors. **Chris Sheasby** (England, Rugby 7's) played a strong part in the England team who performed well in the early rounds, but were not in contention for the medals.

Sadly absent were **David Dixon**, Hon. Secretary of the Commonwealth Games Federation, who had the misfortune to be ill, but who has been re-elected to serve a further term, and **Robert Stinson**, Hon. Treasurer of the IAAF. Present in other capacities were **Michael Beloff**, a member of the Court of Arbitration for Sport, **Chris Chataway**, a senior official of the England team, **Tony Walk**, Coach and Treasurer of the Botswana Athletics Federation, **Adrian Metcalfe**, commentating for South African TV, **Andrew Harriman**, manager of the England Rugby team, and **Paul Willcox**, on the Commonwealth Games Federation staff.

## **OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE 1997 U.S.A. TOUR**

### ***By Mark Steed (results prepared by Chris Thorne)***

Preparations for the U.S. Tour began with a successful training camp at Rugby School one weekend in mid-February. Whilst two days can have little impact on the level of fitness or in the development of skills, it did serve as a very valuable opportunity for fostering a corporate team spirit among the athletes and a good working relationship between athletes and coaches.

So, when the team assembled at Heathrow that Saturday in March, some groundwork had already been done: this was essential as our tour schedule dictated that we would face Dartmouth and Brown at Hanover the following day

#### **v. Dartmouth and Brown, Sunday 6<sup>th</sup>. April, The Memorial Field, Hanover**

Dartmouth and Brown universities are a well paired team, with Dartmouth's strengths in Cross-country and the throws being complemented by the Sprinter-jumpers from Brown. The day of the match was cool with a slight breeze, there was still snow on the ground - it was not a day for sprinters. The Hammer and Javelin competitions were held on some local swampland away from the main arena, but this did not daunt the spirit of the competitors. The men's match was always going to be a close one. There were some excellent races on the track, most notably the epic battle in the 5000m between the Irishman, Neville Davey [D-B] and the Australian, **Josh Funder** [O-C], Davey taking the race on the last lap. The Oxbridge men impressed on the track taking the 200m [**David Gardiner**], 400m [**Anders Lustgarten**], 800m [**Niall Linden**] and 1500m [**James Trapmore** in a p.b. of 3:52.84]. There were other notable performances from **Dan Leggate** who ran a p.b. in the 1500m, so did **Huw Lobb** who broke 15 minutes for the first time in the 5000m. The only two Oxbridge wins in the field went to decathlete, **Steve Rogers** in the Javelin and to James Brierly who jumped 2:10m off a five stride run up in the High Jump. One other performance in the field is worthy of note, **Rob Trezona**, the Cambridge President, who, as is the wont of team captains, out of a misplaced sense of leadership and commitment to the team, ventured into the circle for first time and set an inaugural p.b. in the Hammer - it is just rather sad that his effort was surpassed by the winning putt in the shot, an excellent distance of 18.72m, by former World Junior Champion, Adam Nelson! The Women's match was not so close, gaining only three wins on the track and two in the field. **Jacqui Street** took the 100m [12.82], Ellen O'Hare won the 800m in commanding style [2:12.06], and **Clare Martin** had a comfortable win in the 1500m [4:37.78]. In the field, **Rachel Stott** set a p.b. in the Hammer [41.74m], as did **Bethan Page-Jones** in the Triple Jump [11.14m], both winning their events. Many commented on the efficiency and the good natured spirit in which the officials ran the meeting, a spirit that perhaps is best illustrated by the Marksman's comment "The Brits in lane 4, the Colonies in lane 5." In the final analysis, the men's match ended Oxbridge 9 wins, Dartmouth-Brown 10 wins. The Oxbridge women went down 5 wins to 12, giving an overall match win to our hosts 22 - 14.

The tour was so organised that we had our matches on the weekends, so we spent the week in training and sightseeing. Hence, after a couple of days of excellent hospitality in Hanover, we drove down to Harvard through a snowstorm. The facilities at Harvard are state of the art, and there was a novelty for many in being able to train on such a fast track. The throwers too were able to practise indoors, so only the distance runners had to face the cold. Not that it was all fun; inspired by such excellent training conditions, **Oke Odudo**, the Cambridge high hurdler, set out to complete his mammoth 7 x 150m session that afternoon, only to have greater success as a thrower! We were able to spend some time seeing the sights of Boston, before we made the one-hour drive to Providence, RI, and to Brown University. After further excellent hospitality and some training on both the indoor and the outdoor tracks we moved on to New Haven for our match against our old rivals, Harvard and Yale.

#### **v. Harvard and Yale, Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>. April, Dewitt-Cuyler Track, New Haven**

The two previous encounters in this match had been very keenly contested. The Oxbridge tourists had won a memorable victory 19 events to 15 at Harvard in 1993. But the Americans had made amends in the Centenary at Iffley Road in 1995 which was decided on the Men's 4 x 400m, the final race of the afternoon 19 events to 18. We believed that we had a realistic chance of taking the match, but knew that it was going to be very close – and so it was to prove.

The Oxford and Cambridge women got off to an outstanding start with wins for **Rachel Stott** in the Hammer [43.60m, her second p.b. of the tour], for **Clare Martin** in the 1500m [4:37.81], for **Carolyn May** in the High Jump [1.65m], for **Ellen O'Hare** in the 800m [2:11.48] and for **Esther Casson** in the 400m [58.74]. GB Junior Heptathlete, **Rebecca Lewis** recorded personal bests to win both the Javelin [36.98m] and the Shot [11.54m] and also won the Long Jump [5.60m]. The men also recorded wins early in the match, Decathlete **Pierre Faber** won the Shot [15.33m], **James Brierley** set a new record in the High Jump [2:15m], **Steve Rogers** again won the Javelin [57.44m], and our strength on the track was seen again in wins for **Lustgarten** [400m - 47.54], **Linden** [800m - 1:54.74], and **Trapmore** [1500m - 3:56.20]. The hopes of a repeat of the win in 1993 were high as Oxford-Cambridge took a 14 events to 8 lead in the 36 event contest. However, Oxford-Cambridge were destined to gain only two further wins in the afternoon, **Dan Leggate** in the 5k [15:32.01] and **Bethan Page-Jones** in the Triple Jump [11.12m]

The Roll-Call of Champions in the programme bore ample testimony to the dominance of the Americans in the sprints and hurdles in recent years, this year was no exception, Harvard-Yale took all eight of these individual races. Most notable among these were the match record breaking performances of Heather Hanson of Harvard in 100m [12.31] and Peter Coghlan of Yale in 110mH [14.33]. Given the sprinting strength in the American camp, going into the relays 16 events apiece was never likely to give the Oxbridge side a realistic chance of a win. The match ended 20 events to 16, but it was in reality a much closer affair. The match was decided in the little contests in the field: in the Long Jump where **Rashan Clark** [Yale] pipped **Glyn Chidlow** by 2cm, **Brenden Smith** [Yale] edged **Huw Jenkin** by 4cm in the Triple Jump and **Mark Clayman** [Harvard] won the Discus by 14cm from **Pierre Faber**. It was a great afternoon's track and field – it was a great contest. We had gone out to the States and our highest priority was winning this match, the athletes gave of their best [some 12 personal bests were set that afternoon]

and we had lost - it was a bitter disappointment to the whole team.

#### Men' s Results

#### Women' s Results

Our itinerary next took us to New York, where, on our arrival. we were treated to a VIP evening at 'the ball game' as guests of the owner of the New York Yankies, Mr. George Steinbrenner. Quite clearly the envy of the locals, like American's watching a Test match, we lacked the necessary inside knowledge and technical vocabulary to sound convincing: 'It's four rounders to nil' one of our party was heard to remark. It was a great evening and one which we will drop into conversation to torture all fans of baseball hereafter. After a day of sightseeing, the Metropolitan Museum and a guided tour of the indoor training facilities at the Chelsea Harbour Pier, we drove up to Ithaca to Cornell University, our final stay of the tour.

We had some five days to pick ourselves up from the defeat of the previous weekend and to prepare for the final match against Penn-Cornell. The match was to be the inaugural match on their new track.

#### v. Penn and Cornell, Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>. April, Robert J. Kane Sports Complex, Ithaca, NY

Those who were at the match will not forget it for a long time - it was conducted in what were likely to be the coldest conditions an outdoor meeting can take place. Fears abounded for pulled muscles, but as a wise old coach observed, athletes always warm up properly on very cold days and pull muscles on war ones. The field events programme had a certain idiosyncrasy according to which all the women's field events started at 12:30 p.m. with the men's events to follow afterwards. This naturally meant that there were great clashes between events and no one knew at what time any of the men's events were likely to start or when to begin warming up.

The match itself was a one way tide, Penn and Cornell were simply too strong for us. We chose to score the match by points; the final result 232 – 140 disguises the fact that the Oxbridge men effectively lost 12 – 6 and the women 15 – 2. Having said that, in the men's match, we more than held our own on the track, **Anders Lustgarten** completing a memorable double in the 200m and the 400m [22.13 and 48.15] and **Josh Funder** won the 5000m [14:56.97] from **Dan Leggate** [15:03.77]. **Nyall Linden** won the race of the day in an exciting photo finish in the 800m from Penn's **Neil Roirdan**, both given the same time [1:54.57]; and **James Trapmore** cruised home in the 1500m [3:54.42]. **James Brierley** won the High Jump in appalling conditions [2:06m], and like **Lustgarten**, **Linden** and **Trapmore**, he returned home undefeated on tour, a veritable feat. There were few highlights in the women's match: both our wins went to **Clare Martin**, who, clad in a crop top in sub-zero conditions, won both the 800m [2:11.45] and the

3000m [10:09.58] and she, too, returned unvanquished. It wasn't just that Penn-Cornell had one or two good athletes in each event, they had several guests of a similar calibre; as **Becky Lewis** put it, 'running the 200m it felt as if the whole crowd got up and charged past you.' It was another defeat, but the strength and depth of the combined forces of Penn and Cornell were too strong for us on the day. Dr. Leroy Walker, President of the US Olympic Committee, and Mr. Charles Moore, the Director of Athletics at Cornell spoke at the reception and banquet on the Hockey Rink after the match.

#### Men' s Results

#### Women' s Results

Like many Oxbridge teams before us, we were simply staggered by the scale of the facilities of our American cousins. The indoor tracks, indoor throwing areas, the professional coaching staff, the 'lifting advisors', the weights rooms, the teams of physios, the electronic timing and starting were all taken for granted by our hosts. All of these were necessary facilities for undergraduates in the Ivy League. Given the infra structure, let alone professional coaching, it is all the more remarkable that we are still able to maintain a sufficient standard to sustain a competitive American series. It is perhaps significant that on tour we beat the Americans in the non-technical areas: where facilities and coaching expertise are less important. Time and again we heard speakers remind the young athletes that they were reaping the benefits of what had been given to the University by the Alumni. The American athletes were appreciative of the opportunities which were offered them by their universities and understood that they would be expected in time 'to pay back' by contributing to some future fundraising scheme which would benefit subsequent generations. Let us hope that some of these sentiments rubbed off on our athletes too, so that we can look forward to the day when Achilles members provide both Oxford and Cambridge with indoor training and other facilities to rival those we saw in the Ivy League!

Thanks should be recorded in a report of this nature to coaching staffs of each of the universities. Particular gratitude is due to Mr. Charles Moore and to his team at Cornell University [especially Tom LaFalce who rode shotgun with us on tour] whose turn it was to make the arrangements for our visit.

### ***THE VARSITY MATCH 1973***

#### ***From Dick Saunders***

**A grey morning at Crystal Palace heralded the 99th Varsity Match, with an experienced Oxford team favourites to score a 9th successive victory, despite the presence of some talented newcomers in the Cambridge squad. In the event, the match was a classic.**

The sprint battle between two junior international freshmen went to Cambridge, with **Tony Gershuny** finishing ahead of **Bob Munns** twice. But **Steve Whit** was unimpressed by the upstarts and took his third successive 200m by a good three yards. As well as White, **Bob Tait** with two hurdles victories, and the ever dependable **Phil Lewis** and **Bob Steele** did the business for Oxford on the track, while **Tom Neville** and **Mike Byers** scored useful points in the field. And when **Julian Goater** took the 5000m in a new record time, it looked good for Oxford.

But Cambridge kept close all afternoon, inspired by three field event wins from Princeton decathlete and US Olympic triallist in 1972 **Jim Reilly**, and a series of fine performances like the unexpected high hurdles victory by **Richard Burridge**, nowadays better known as the owner of Desert Orchid. **David Rea** and **Dave Williams** chalked up their expected victories in the shot and 400m respectively, and **Steve Briault** edged **Warwick Ewers** in the steeplechase. Finally, a one-two in the javelin by **Colin Shaw** and **Roger Barr** brought Cambridge within three points and just the 4x100m relay - on its second scoring appearance in a Varsity match - to come.

Thus the stage was set for **Peter Arbuthnot**, who had earlier finished 4th in the 100m. We all knew he was the faster of the two final leg runners, but few believed that he could make up the 7m deficit he inherited. But make it up he did, powering ahead just before the line, and Cambridge were celebrating the first tied match since the switch from scoring by events to points in 1938. The dramatic finish gave the match the sort of press coverage we were no longer accustomed to, including a big splash on the sports pages of the News of the World: Peter rued the disappointment of his friends that his first appearance there had not been for something more salacious.....

This was to be the last match at Crystal Palace, bringing to an end the era when it took place at the headquarters of British athletics. But there can have been few better ways to bow out.

#### ***From Peter Crawshaw***

The match went back to Crystal Palace one final time in 1976. One can only speculate about the outcome of the match had **Willie Bogan** been selected by Oxford for the Blues' individual 400 (which he

won for the Centipedes unpressed in 49.6, faster than both Oxford Blues, and only 0.1 off **Dave Williams'** winning time) or 200 (in which he ran 22.2) and thus also been eligible (under the rules then in force) for the relay. The second team javelin was won for Alverstone by **John Gosden** with a superior performance to **Colin Shaw's** winning throw in the Blues' match.

Crystal Palace was also the venue for the Relays Match, held in March as part of the inaugural Varsity Games. The event coincided with the National Cross-Country Championships and, due to the consequent lack of available distance runners, it was agreed between the Presidents that no 4x1600m would be contested. A tie was therefore possible for the first time in the match's history, but Oxford won by 4 events to 2, with Cambridge strong in the two hurdles events but otherwise unable to make an impression on a strong Oxford squad.

The Freshmen's and Field Events matches took place in the traditional Michaelmas Term, at Iffley Road and Milton Road respectively. The former event was won narrowly by Oxford, thanks to their greater track strength, with **Adam Chedburn**, **Andy Etchells**, **Axel Salander** and **John Rye** to the fore, which negated Cambridge's talented field events performers, including **John Slaney**, **Eric Christiansen**, and **Tim Reed**. These three helped Cambridge to get their revenge in the Field Events match the following week, by 5 events to 2. The autumn season was brought to its traditional close by the Blues' Cross-Country match, where **Julian Goater's** first individual victory was not enough to prevent Cambridge from taking their fifth consecutive team victory by a comfortable margin.

Although matches had taken place against visiting teams from Harvard/Yale and Cornell/Pennsylvania, no Achilles tour to the U.S.A. had taken place since 1965. However, thanks to the efforts of **Robert Stinson** and the generosity of the Achilles Trust, the tradition was revived in 1973, and a party of 21 athletes (**Julian Goater** and **Paul Orchart** had to join the tour later), plus Robert (Team Manager), **Roy Carter** (Coach) and their wives duly met at Gatwick in early June, bound for New York. The departure date (before the end of Oxford and Cambridge terms) meant that a number of Varsity Match winners, including **Steve White**, **Tom Neville**, **Richar Burridge** and **Jim Reilly** were unavailable for selection due to examination commitments. The team was, however, strengthened by the inclusion of four athletes - **John Hemery**, **David Roberts** (just starting to show the form that was to make him Britain's Europa Cup 100m selection a couple of years later), **Adu Conteh** and **Brian Hull** - who had gone down from University the previous year. Sadly, we had no Pole Vaulters available of the required standard and thus were giving the opposition a one event start in each match.

After a delayed flight and a long bus journey (the photo of **Phil Lewi** on the bus, fast asleep with his head on **Rick Dillon's** shoulder was a classic), we arrived in Ithaca, where we (including Robert and Roy, but not their wives who were segregated in a nearby motel) were accommodated in dormitory-type conditions in the "Visiting Team Locker Room", immediately adjacent to the track (Schoellkopf Field). The local press had been alerted to our arrival and ran various articles extolling the performances of various of our number, including **Richard Gyles** (he of the off-white headband) who was billed as one of Europe's leading long jumpers but had been a late withdrawal through injury. We enjoyed the delightful surroundings of the Cornell campus, despite extremely hot and humid weather conditions, and even received some visitors: the phone never seemed to stop ringing for Adu, and **Bob Tait** had his own personal fan club (an American lady that he had met on the way back from the OUAC visit to Poland the previous winter).

Cornell and Penn were probably the strongest two Ivy League colleges that year and seemed to offer invincible opposition. However, as the meet approached, the team's spirits were boosted, firstly by the discovery that three of the Penn stars (hurdlers Bruce Collins and Harold Schwab and Decathlete Fred Samara) would be away at the National Collegiate Championships and secondly by the belated appearance of **Julian Goater**. Julian had travelled separately so that he could accept an invitation to run a 5000m at the World Games in Helsinki: his arrival by light aircraft and his account of his recent PB made us feel that we might stand a chance after all. **With Brian Hull** donning his Polish National Tracksuit, on the day of the meet we were ready for all comers.

Alas, the meet got off to a disappointing start for Achilles: **John Hemery** was narrowly beaten in the high hurdles and our apparent best hope for a track win, **Phil Lewis**, could only finish second to Cornell's Bob Anastasio in the half mile. Our fortunes were restored however by a tremendous sprint double (how often has this been achieved against the Americans?) by **Dave Roberts**, by **John Hemery** turning the tables in the 440y hurdles, and a 1-2-3 from **Tony Moore**, **Warwick Ewers** and **Malcolm Firth** in the miles despite temperatures being so high that all runners had to be doused by hoses in the back straight each lap.

The key event, and the most exciting, was the mile, where Julian and Bob Steele faced Penn's Denis Fikes, a 3.58 man. The plan had been for Bob to set a fast pace so as to blunt Fikes' fast finish, but in the event Julian was forced to lead virtually from the gun with Fikes closely trailing him all the way and the second strings soon left well back. As the leaders entered the finishing straight for the last time, Fikes made his expected move and seemed to have the race in his grasp, but Julian had other ideas and

refused to allow a gap to develop. The lead must have changed hands several times in the last 50 yards, but it was the Oxford man who showed the greater determination and finally breasted the tape first.

Cornell/Penn made their expected clean sweep of the throws (where our chances were reduced by **Colin Shaw** suffering a shoulder injury), pole vault and high jump, but things went better in the horizontal jumps, where **Mike Byers** was a convincing winner of the long jump and **Brian Hull** (with a last round effort) snatched victory in the triple jump. **David Williams** ran valiantly effort against strong opposition in quarter mile but could not hold off the strong finish of Mik McNeil, so that Cornell/Penn led by 8 events to 7 with only the (4x110y) relay to come. With **Dave Roberts** and **Adu Conteh** in the team, even if the other runners (the two presidents, **Paul Temporal** and **Tony Martin**) were more in the "reliable" category, we were hopeful, though hardly confident of victory. We need not have worried, as the Americans dropped the baton and we had only to negotiate our remaining changeovers to secure a tie.

Our hosts were most generous in their hospitality and our celebrations of what felt like a win continued well into the night: even Colin, with his arm in a sling, seemed to find a way to make the most of the occasion. The team climbed aboard the bus at what seemed like an impossibly early hour for the drive to Newhaven, where we spent a few relaxing days before moving on to Cambridge. Head Coach Bob Giegengack and our other Yale hosts were extremely friendly (though nonplussed by **Malcolm Firth's** Pythonesque knotted-handkerchief-on-the-head routine and still more so by **Bob Steele's** version of "Bye Bye blackbird") but we were in for a more frosty reception when we arrived at Harvard. Word of our performances at Ithaca had reached their Head Coach, the redoubtable Bill McCurdy, who was determined that his team (Yale, having been heavily defeated in their dual meet, had only a minimal representation in the joint team) would do better: a "psyching out" process duly ensued. The scene was set for something of a battle at Soldiers Field.

The meet was preceded by over 12 hours' torrential rain, and the (cinder) track was literally under several inches of water. The jumps accordingly were held indoors: this arguably served to dilute our team spirit, but there could be no disputing the quality of the American performances, and an impressive long/triple jump double by Vincent Vanderpool-Wallace meant that we were on the wrong end of a clean sweep in the field events. Things went a little better on the track, where **Hemery** repeated his 440y hurdles success against strong opposition and we dominated in the distance events with victories by **Lewis, Goater and Moore**, but we were dismayed when **Dave Roberts** was disqualified in the 220 (which he "won") for running outside his lane (which could not be seen due to the flooding of the track). Our disgust (evidenced by furious brandishing of the IAAF handbook by Robert) over this was only slightly reduced when the leading American quarter miler suffered a similar decision, giving **Phil Lewis** a double. Salt was rubbed in when **Dave Roberts** pulled a hamstring on the first leg of the relay, in which, given the less than fully harmonious relations between the two American universities, we had fancied our chances. All was quickly forgiven, however, in the post-match celebrations: Harvard too got to hear "Bye Bye blackbird" and the coincidence of various alumni reunions (thank you, Class of '48!) meant that we had plenty to entertain us.

Our stay in the Greater Boston area enabled **John Hemery** to use his old college contacts to allow our participation at an open meet at the Boston College track. This was a fun event and some members of the team made good use of much improved weather and a fast, outsized (the only time I have run the first bend of a 440y *outside* the stands) track to record their best performances of the tour. Most of the team spent the last few days at the delightful Yale outdoor centre (scene of impressive hard boiled egg consumption by some) while a few sought out the delights of Manhattan.

The tour was a great success, in both athletic and cultural terms: the "supporting cast" (which included **Phil Aylward, Martin Baker, Joe Hughes** and **Tim Lintott**, as well as the writer of this piece) enjoyed it no less than those already mentioned above. Robert and Roy provided excellent logistical support and were mostly successful in keeping our minds on athletics.

### ***Other Achilles events***

Sadly, the previous season's British Athletics League performances could not be maintained. Many of the team that had won Division 4 (including **Martin Winbolt Lewis**) had decided to retire on a high note and Achilles finished last on Division 3 by some way. There were some high spots, **mostly fr Henk Altmann and John Bryant** in the distance events and **Chris Kidd** and **Tony Shoebridge** in the field.

Many of the U.S. tour team reassembled at the end of the summer to take part in a high class event at Meadowbank, to which **Robert Stinson** had managed to get us invited. The long summer had unfortunately taken its toll on the fitness levels of most of us, and we were generally outclassed. Even **John Hemery** had difficulty avoiding the woodwork in the hurdles and announced his retirement at the end of the season: this was to prove premature, as the all-time ranking lists shown elsewhere will demonstrate.

## **OXFORD RELAY RUNNERS REUNITE**

**By Roger Thorn**

**When Oxford won the 4 x One Mile in the 1958 Relays Match against Cambridge their time of 17 mins. 1.8 secs. was a series record, beating the previous best by 26.6 seconds. Their time would have been a world record only 5 years before. Only a Swedish team of full internationals had run faster.**

Imagine the quartet's surprise, 40 years later, to see that their series record, achieved on the old cinder track at Iffley Road, Oxford, was still intact. (It was on the same cinders that **Roger Bannister** had been the first athlete to beat the four minute mile barrier four years earlier).

The Relays Match now incorporates a race on tartan tracks over 4 x 1500 metres, but the 1958 quartet's time, when converted to the metric distance, is approximately 10 seconds faster than the series 4 x 1500 metres record, set by Oxford in 1990.

Relay running over the middle distances can of course be a tactical procession, unconducive to fast times. But in 1958 the race was fast from the start, and continued neck and neck until the last lap of the last leg. The contemporary report by The Times correspondent captures this tension.

The 1958 quartet, all of whom are still in training, decided to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of their record, by reuniting at Iffley Road, Oxford, in order to re-run the distance, albeit at a pace appropriate for veterans in their early 60' !! After going down **Geoff Eales** won the Canadian 1500 metres Championship in 1960, **Ranjit Bhatia** won the Indian 1500 metres Championship in 1963, and **John Howes** was an Australian Commonwealth Games triallist over 800 metres in 1962. Geoff Eales is the Distinguished Professor of Zoology at the University of Manitoba, and John Howes was Professor of Logic at the University of Capetown. So it is that on Saturday, 22nd August 1998 the quartet, in 1958 running order, of Professor John Howes (Ch.Ch.), Roger Thorn (Exeter), Ranjit Bhatia (Jesus) and Professor Geoff Eales (Keble) came together again. Straightforward as that sounds, consider the logistics: John Howes lives in Melbourne, Roger Thorn in Paris, Ranjit Bhatia in Delhi and Geoff Eales in Winnipeg! Ranjit scored heavily when he reported casually that his chauffeur from Heathrow had been none other than the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Colin Lucas, an old undergraduate friend! **Roger Thorn**, Hon. Sec. O.U.A.C. 1960-61, had undertaken to organize the reunion as the only European-based member of the squad. He was so impressed at his team-mates' readiness to drop everything and cross the world that, unknown to them, he engineered the presence of the rest of the contemporary middle distance squad, plus the 1958 Lo Hurdles team whose record on the straight also still stands. The climax came when he led the three other Milers into Exeter Fellows' Gardens, where their contemporaries, secretly lying in wait, received them with a standing ovation. Emotions ran high because some of the overseas members of the squad had not seen each other since the end of the Trinity Term 195 !!

On the same occasion therefore three-quarters of Oxford's 1958 Low Hurdles squad celebrated their 4 year-old series record. O.U.A.C. President (1958-59) **Rex van Rossum** (Pembroke), **Professor Don Smith** (Merton) and **John Pinnick** (S.E.H.) attended, while **Mike Riegels** (Pembroke) was detained by business travel. In Africa, Don Smith had flown in specially from Auckland to be there!! Their time of 1 min. 38.9 averages out at 24. secs. per man - a time rarely beaten in the Varsity Match nowadays. Not bad for a quartet that included a converted half-miler (Smith) and quarter miler (Riegels).

Also present was **Derek Johnson** (Lincoln), President O.U.A.C. 1955-56, among whose many versatile exploits is the little known fact that he was a member of the 1954 Low Hurdles squad. Their record round the turn still stands, and is indeed the oldest in the book. Other members of the Middle Distance squad present were: **John Holt** (St Catherine's) President O.U.A.C. 1959-60, **Stephen James** (B.N.C.), **David Hall** (Merton), **Peter Banner O.B.E.** (Univ.) and **John Boulter** (Queen's). Absent for family or business reasons were milers **Sir Rodger Bell Q.** (B.N.C.) and **Alan Cordon** (Magdalen), and 3 milers **Roger Bell** (St Caths), **Paddy Montague** (Balliol) and **Kevin Gilligan** (Wadham).

After the private photo opportunities in Exeter Fellows' Gardens the veteran athletes jogged down to the Iffley Road track, where the photographers of The Times and the Oxford Mail awaited them. Oxford's Alumni Officer, Rodney Buckton, jogged down to the track with them, taking photographs on the hoof! Rodney, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor Dr Colin Lucas and the Director of the External Relations Office, Dr Paul Flather, presented Roger Thorn with a memento volume of prints "Views of Oxford".

In the evening the team and wives, a total of 25, dined in The Randolph, where they toasted the O.U.A.C. and their absent team-mates. Speeches were impromptu, and that which fetched the loudest applause was also the shortest. The speaker was Ranjit Bhatia. He stood up and said: "Mr President, I am overwhelmed". Then he sat down, overcome by emotion and mobbed by his team-mates. After the speeches John Holt, a former Organ Scholar, turned his hand to the piano accordeon. He played 4 marches which he had composed in Scottish Reel idiom, in honour of each of the 4 Milers. The party then repaired to Exeter for a few beers to catch up on each other's news over the last 39 years. John Holt continued to entertain the company on his piano accordeon.

On the Sunday morning Messrs Eales, James, Howes, Banner and Thorn worked out in South Parks, the scene of endless training sessions all those years ago. The general opinion was that the hills were steeper than they used to be. This despite the fact that Stephen James is the reigning U.K. Veterans' Champion (60-65) over 1500, 5,000 and 10,000 metres; while John Howes is the current Victoria State Veteran's Champion (60- 65) over 400 metres in 61.3 seconds.

Upon dispersal it was agreed that the 50th Anniversary would also be celebrated appropriately !! The squad then repaired respectively to elhi, Melbourne, Winnipeg, Auckland, Strasbourg, Paris and to all corners of the U.K

## **FIFTY YEARS AGO**

### **From Norris McWhirter**

**The year 1948 - an unbelievable half a century ago - was the one in which the average age of undergraduates was 26 and everyone, even at Trinity College, Oxford, was subject to the most meagre food rations. I remember there was one staircase on which the three occupants had two legs between them.**

This Olympic season started with the University Sports on the lifeless tight-bended track at White City, West London, which was then 40 years old. It had been completed in time for Queen Alexandra to watch the track and field events of the IVth Olympic Games in the summer of 1908 and had been the scene of the epi Dorando marathon finish. The weather in 1949 was appropriate to any penultimate Saturday in March, pretty chilly and gusty. The Referee of this 74th encounter was Dr. **Rex Salisbury Woods** (Downing, Cambridge) who had won the shot both before and after World War I. His greatest claim to fame was as a Brigadier in the RAMC when, lone-handed, he quelled an impending mass malingering of Ashanti troops in Madagascar in 1942. When they lined up all complaining of low backache, he got out his syringe, to which he affixed an elephant needle of heroic triangular proportions, solemnly telling their sergeant that the prescribed medical treatment for this tiresome ailment was "disturbing the tissue".

Others on the in-field included **Roly Harper** (Ox), the 1932 Olympic hurdler, the impish Scottish judge, **Lord Milligan** (Ox) from a former Achilles world 4 x 880 yard record relay team; **John Marks** (Camb), shortly after selected to light the Olympic flame at Wembley; the announcer, Olympic 100 metres champion, **Harold Abrahams** (Camb) of *Chariots of Fire* memory.- and the Czar of the AAA, Jack Crump.

In absolute terms the athletics was undistinguished, but in relative terms one-sided. Apart from the hat trick (high jump, pole vault and discus) by the Cambridge President, **Ivor Vind** from Denmark, Cambridge won only two other events and got only three second places, so going down by the record points margin of 83 to 43 points and so starting a string of Oxford wins which lasted for a decade until 1958.

In June the Achilles Club comfortably won the Kinnaird Trophy at the Polytechnic Harriers track, Chiswick and also the Sward Trophy. The unknown Alastair McCorquodale (London AC) churned past the hitherto invincible E. MacDonald Bailey to win the 100 yards, with **John Fairgrieve** (Achilles) third.

The AAA Championships in July were virtually Olympic team trials. Nine members of the Club made the British team They were **Fairgrieve** (200m), **Ray Barkway** (110mh), **Harry Whittle** (400mh), **Peter Curry** and **Geoff Tudor** (steeplechase), **Peter Ward** (5000m), **F.R. Webster** (pole vault), **Henry Askew** (long jump), **M V. W. Chote** (javelin) while **E.L.R. Philip** ran in the sprints for India. At the opening ceremony **Roger Bannister** (Ox) as aide to the starter **Evan Hunter**, saved the day for the host nation by finding and breaking into a locked car with a half-brick in the nick of time, to extract the Union flag for the parade.

**Ray Barkway** later served as the starter for the four minute mile of 1954 at Iffley Road, but was soon after sadly killed piloting a naval aircraft whose aeroengine failed.

At the AAA championships Achilles won only three titles - the steeplechase with **Peter Curry**, later a QC and expert on public and company meetings procedures, the pole vault with **F. R. Webster**, who had been in our 1936 Olympic team, and the **4 x 110 yards** sprint relay.

This last is for me a poignant White City memory against the Polytechnic Harriers. **John Fairgrieve**, later a distinguished surgeon, led off and handed to **John Havard**, later Secretary of the BMA. My late twin brother **Ross** ran the third stage, knowing that he and I would have to get a virtually perfect baton exchange if we were to hold off the deadly Trinidadian world record holder MacDonald Bailey on the anchor stage. It came off and now it appears that no other twins have yet made it into the ever lengthening roll of AAA champions. I came across the baton in the loft only the other day.

We learnt with great sadness of the death of the winning President, **Peter Wallis**, the South African born quarter-miler, on 21 November, from his wife Barbara. His death had been not once but twice previously recorded in the Obituary Roll in our annual reports and the then Hon. Secretary and **Sandy Duncan** had to make two profound apologies. Quite undisturbed Peter was pursuing his successful career in the City,

It was a different era when amateurism was total, the use of drugs unknown and competition was fun. Elements in the media and some administrators have more to answer for than they will ever know.

## SEVENTY YEARS AGO

### *From Gervas Clay*

When I went up to New College in 1926, we had just been put into the second division of Oxford College athletic teams. The following year when I was Chairman we won the second division easily and I asked if we could challenge Balliol who had won the first division. I was asked for the good of Oxford athletics to withdraw my request, which I did. The following year we were in the first division and tied with Balliol for the cup, which we won the following year. Balliol had been the holders of the cup for several years, and when we won it from them, they couldn't find it for some time. It was eventually found in their cellars....

At the Annual General Meeting, the President of OUAC made a strong appeal to all the college chairmen to put in as full teams as possible for the cup competitions. I took everybody aback by getting up and asking if I was allowed to enter two teams, one in each division. This was greeted with some astonishment, but was agreed to and I entered a full team for both divisions. That it paid off is shown by the fact that a member of the New College second team ran in the Relays Match for Oxford against Cambridge.

In about 1929 I arranged a match between New College and Birmingham University, which we won easily!

I ran second for Achilles in the hurdles against Ulster: we went on from there to Dublin where we competed on a very wet and stormy day. I won the hurdles by inches but was disqualified for knocking down 3 hurdles: the Irishman who was second was disqualified for knocking down 4....

I ran in Paris in 1928 in what were then the International Universities Games. An American walked over to the start of my heat and said he wished to run. He had been a semi-finalist at the Olympics 2 weeks before. The starter said 'You're lucky, there's a lane free', and allowed him to run. He won the heat and the final. I was beaten into third place by a Frenchman who had also run in the Olympics. We came over the last hurdle together and he beat me by inches on the run-in: the French press were highly interested in the unknown Englishman who had nearly beaten their Olympian.

Two anecdotes concerning **Lord Burghley** may amuse you. I was second against him in the 440y hurdles of the Midland Counties Championship. Afterwards we were lying on the grass recovering when the local secretary came up and said "Excuse me, m'Lord, but a member of our association for the past 30 years would be honoured to have a word with your Lordship". Poor Burghley had to get up and go off, while Clay continued to lie on the grass saying to himself "There are some advantages in *not* being a Lord".

Later that year I entered for the A.A.A. Championships at Stamford Bridge. I changed and went down to the gate on to the ground intending to warm up. I was stopped by a policeman who asked what I was doing. I told him and he replied that the heats of the hurdles were not for another half hour and that I must go back to the changing rooms until we were called. I started to go back when I met Burghley coming down, and fell in behind him. The policeman stood to attention and saluted Burghley, who went out on to the ground, followed by me. On this occasion Clay said to himself that there were sometimes advantages in *being* a Lord...

**Gervas Clay** competed in the 120y hurdles in the 1929 Varsity Match and was British Universities Champion that year.