



OUABC

Alumni Newsletter

Michaelmas
Term 2019

Welcome to the Michaelmas Edition.

The best way to maximize one's pension is not to die and alumni need not be of a statistical inclination to realise that the longer one lives; the longer one can expect to live for the simple reason that one has not died. With those uplifting thoughts welcome to the 2019 Michaelmas edition. The first sentence of this paragraph is a poignant reminder of our mortality. Readers will know of the sad death of Percy Lewis in October. A full obituary is at the end of this edition. Percy's funeral on 8th November was well attended by alumni.

This edition aims to inform Alumni of forthcoming events so a few announcements are required:

The OUABC Committee 2019-2020.

The new Committee is as follows:

President: Rachel Dauncey, 3rd Year, Trinity College, {Maths};

Vice-President {of Charities & Community for Oxford Students' Union}: Kaya Axelson; post-graduate Department of Politics studying Climate Policy.

Vice-President: Lydia Welham {President of Sports Federation}

Secretary: Luka Deekeling: 2nd Year, Magdalen {PPE};

Treasurer: Benjamin Penny, 2nd Year, St. Edmund Hall, {Earth Sciences};

Men's Captain: Alexander Brindle, 2nd Year, Somerville {PPE};
Women's Captain: Katya Marks, 4th Year Corpus Christi {Medicine};
Men's Vice-Captain: Stanislas Dumas, 3rd year, Keble {Engineering};
Women's Vice-Captain: Talia Hubble, 2nd Year, St Peter's, Medicine {undertaking an accelerated four year degree as a graduate}.

The Committee is supported by the following:

Show Secretaries: Fran Cullura (University), Horatio Sykes (Oriol)

Welfare Officers: Sarah Ashcroft-Jones (Queen's), Anna Keszthelyi (Hertford), Andrew Marotta (St. Hildas)

Social Secretaries: Zoey Zhang (Brasenose), Edward White (Somerville)

Sponsorship, Marketing, Stash Officers: Ishan Kapur (St. Hilda's), Tom Michaelis (New), Cameron Kanda (Exeter) respectively.

Sports' Ball Success.

The OUABC Women's Squad won the Blues Team performance of the Year. Last year's Women's Captain, Lydia Welham, wrote on Facebook the following day: "Last night's sports' ball was a lovely recognition of what we already know; OUABC has had an incredible year and is an incredible Club. Winning the Blues Team performance of the Year is a great way of celebrating the hard work of the women's team with their tremendous success at the BUS and their readiness to take on anyone at club shows at a moment's notice. Kaya Axelson, Amy Hodgkin and Pauly Curtman fought at a Bristol Uni ABC club show in Hilary term (23rd February). Kaya stopped her girl but Amy and Pauly fought well but both lost unfortunately. There are few, if any, boxing clubs in the country that had twelve women competing this season in an unbelievable twenty eight bouts. There is amazing mutual support, kindness, and energy."

Dave Mace was also nominated as Coach of the Year.

On the 14th June, Lydia Welham and Katya Marks both entered the Haringey Cup and reached the semi-finals in their respective weights.

'Stash' OUABC themed sports' wear and goods .

Items make a great present and one should persuade one's wife, partner, househusband, husband, etc. etc. etc. to buy you a present.

Rain Jacket, £45. Singlet: {Navy, Black, White, & Dark Green}, £14-50. Crewneck Jumper {Navy, Black, White, & Dark Green} £18-15. Fleece {Navy or Black} £30-25. Combination Pant {Navy} £35; Stadium Pant {Navy} £40-15. Tech shorts: {Navy} £20-50. Leggings: {Navy or Black} £25; Crop Top {Black or White}; £16-50. Ruck sack {Navy} £30-25; Small holdall {width 44cm x height 23 cm x depth 26 cm, Navy} £36. Big holdall: {w 60cm; ht, 31cm; d, 34 cm {Navy}, £41. Beanies, {Navy} £10; Hoodie {Navy}, £21-50. Men's & Women's t-shirts, £13-75.

Sizes are XS to XL and normally come with the OUABC logo and the buyer's initials. Available colours are navy, black, white, & dark green. A great present! Canterbury Breathable T-shirt {Navy or white} £22.

The foregoing is right at going to print so for more information contact Cameron Kanda at cameron.kanda@exeter.ox.ac.uk

I have seen facsimiles of the items and they are good!

Alumni Matters

Even for those of us who have been retired for some time, the introduction of data protection legislation and reinforcement of the challenges for charities and unincorporated associations such as the OUABC Alumni Association require attention. It is now the time for the Association to consider how it should be structured and thought is being given to the matter. Watch this space...

Bob Nairac.

2019 is the 50th anniversary of Bob Nairac saving OUABC from oblivion, virtually singlehanded. Anyone winning a blue since owes him a debt of gratitude and it is unlikely that CUABC could have survived without the annual Varsity fixture against OUABC. OUABC folded in 1968 and it was only through Bob's force of personality that, as a freshman, he organized a team to go to Cambridge in 1969 with four weeks' notice. The notes which he produced at the time will be published in the Hilary edition of this newsletter. Bob boxed as Light Middleweight and was Captain in 1969, 1970, 1971, as well as boxing in 1972. It is because of his efforts for OUABC that we toast his memory at re-union dinners.

CUABC are aware of the debt both Clubs owe Bob and it was suggested by their alumni that the fiftieth anniversary should be commemorated. A luncheon is being organised on 13th March 2020 at the Oxford & Cambridge Club, Pall Mall by Charles Masraff {winning featherweight in 1970} and he will shortly circulate details. The Association is grateful to Charles for doing so and the hard work he is putting in to the event. **Please note:** there will be a closing date for payment as numbers need to be confirmed well in advance of the event.

Forthcoming events:

There will be an All Woman Boxing Match this Saturday 16th November at Acer Nethercroft Sports Hall, {i.e. the Iffley Sports' Hall}; Doors open at 6-00pm. OUABC is very keen to obtain sponsorship for this unique event so ask for any support that can be provided. The following link allows the purchase of tickets: https://fixr.co/event/617083947?ref=ALUMNI&fbclid=IwAR1cP58Rn5kJGOhr2VHLYusH2Be-gHFnlLloTKdSTuUrxrkXiw_9MaWd7l

The annual Town v Gown fixture is on 25th January at the Oxford Union with doors opening at 6-30 pm for a 7-00pm start.

Tickets and sponsorship details for both events are available from Rachel Dauncey at rachel.dauncey@trinity.ox.ac.uk

Varsity Match.

As notified in the last edition, the 2020 Varsity match will be on the 7th March at the Town Hall in Oxford starting 7pm to 7-30 pm. It is recommended that you book soon if staying over.

News.

Herewith news of OUABC boxers and alumni:

- 1) Lydia Welham and Katya Marks entered the Haringey Boxing Cup and both got to the semi-final in their respective weights.
- 2) OUABC Outreach was set up in 2014 and aims, as the name suggests to enable OUABC to give something to the community both locally and further afield. OUABC intend to offer trips to their pre-season warm weather training camp in Tenerife and Alex Brindle, the men's team captain is

inviting boxers from his local club in Bristol to a Sunday training session followed by lunch and a tour of Oxford. {See items relating to Carney's Community, Financial Support and Gift Aid, below}

The fund was established with the aim of supporting young boxing talent. The fund has kindly been supported by generous alumni, Magdalen College, and Radley College. Two of the first boxers sponsored by the Outreach programme, Ben Whitaker and Ellie Scotney, are now in the full-time GB Boxing Programme and training to qualify for the 2020 Olympics. If anyone has any questions about Outreach or wishes to contribute, please e-mail Rachel Dauncey at rachel.dauncey@trinity.ox.ac.uk

Website Builder:

The Club and alumni are very thankful to Hugo Morgan for answering the call to assist with the OUABC website. Students and alumni should be able to have their own generic login facilities. Alumni should be able access history of the Club; i.e. who boxed, when, and at what weight, but contact details will be provided only once a secure login facility is available.

Sponsorship

Everyone associated with OUABC appreciates the wonderful support given by London and Oxford Group who sponsored the 2018 Varsity match but the Club is keen to expand the number of sponsors it has. Individual bouts can be sponsored for £100. Alumni are requested to make sponsorship payments through the University, as this means that OUABC gets the full benefit of Gift Aid. Sponsorship will be by weight rather than individual named boxer to allow for last minute changes to the programme. Alumni will get mentioned in the Programme and hopefully more than one alumnus can be persuaded to sponsor each bout.

For either corporate or individual sponsorship please contact the OUABC President, Rachel Dauncey, at rachel.dauncey@trinity.ox.ac.uk.

Financial Support and Gift Aid.

Alumni support OUABC in many ways, financially and by giving their time and thank you to everyone who donates to the Club directly or by standing order to the Alumni Association. The GLD gym would not have been installed without the efforts of Chris Mack and so many alumni and the Outreach programme is going from strength to strength. If anyone wishes to donate by standing order to the Alumni Association please contact the Treasurer, Tim Fell: tim@fell.net. The Alumni Association distributes funds to the Club over time as and when needed and has helped the Club to survive on occasion. For those who wish to donate to the Club directly, it is possible to do so via the University using the following link and such donations attract Gift Aid and are uplifted by 25%.

<https://www.campaign.ox.ac.uk/make-a-gift?id=4a9455e7-b5c0-4b89-8629-a3a814c8e725>

Carney's Community.

In the middle of an election campaign we have heard the political parties make many promises on every subject which affects society. One subject which has been much in the news is youth crime, including knife crime. Actions speak louder than words and Carneys Community is a charity which puts its words into action and the details of its activities are available through the following link: <http://www.carneyscommunity.org/> The size of this newsletter limits what can be written but we hope to include more in the future whether in the newsletter or separately. There are many calls on our time and money, but please give it your consideration.

Remembered:

Basil Hone {Wadham}, who we believe was the oldest boxing alumnus and who boxed and won as a lightweight in the 1946 varsity match has died. He was non-boxing captain in 1947. The following is his obituary from the Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/apr/11/basil-hone-obituary>

The following have also passed away:

Bahman 'Bats' Batmanghelidh, Felsted and St Peter's Hall, Middle 1957 see the following link: https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/bahman-batmanghelidj-northern-virginia-developer-dies-at-83/2019/05/20/1b18d8bc-78ce-11e9-b3f5-5673edf2d127_story.html

Graham Hall, St Paul's and Pembroke, Light Welter 1956 and Welter 1957

PERCY LEWIS: Born: 31st December 1928, died 3rd October 2019.

As Alumni know, the legendary boxer and OUABC coach, Percy Lewis, died peacefully after suffering the effects of dementia for some time. He will not be forgotten by all who were associated with him and his service to OUABC was as wonderful as it was long.

The three longest serving coaches of OUABC have been Alf Gallie, Percy Lewis, and Henry Dean. Percy succeeded Alf in 1976 having been officially the assistant coach for a couple of years, including my last year in 1974. There is no dispute as to who was the finest boxer of the three; it was Percy, who boxed as featherweight {=< 57 kg}; super featherweight {a professional boxing weight between 57-59 kg}; and later, as a lightweight {59-61.2 kg}. If we translate these weights into 'olde' English they are respectively: less or equal to 126 lbs [9 st.]; 126 to 130 lbs; and 130 to 135 lb's.

Percy was born in Trinidad probably on 31st December 1927 *{although some records suggest it was a year later}* into a small, relatively impoverished, close, and happy community. He had an elder brother and a sister, numerous cousins, and a close wider family who, given the nature of the island, lived nearby. At about the age of sixteen with World War 2 drawing to a close, he volunteered for the RAF by claiming to be aged eighteen and came to England to work, subsequently as ground crew. He ended up at RAF Benson which began his connection with Oxford and Oxfordshire which continued to the end.

A southpaw, Percy won an impressive number of amateur bouts and was runner up in the featherweight division of the ABA finals in 1950 and 1951 before winning the title in 1952 and 1953 with all but the last being 'out of the RAF', as the boxing records put it. His 1953 victory was 'out of Oxford YMCA' where Alf Gallie was coach. Perhaps, Percy's greatest achievement was to represent Great Britain at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics in a team which included Henry Cooper and which was coached by none other than Alf.



Most of us know what it is like boxing against the university in the flat country. For some unknown reason, it seems that if an OUABC boxer batters their Varsity opponent to a pulp; they will get a split decision in their favour. A 'knock out' will result in a secure points win, and so on. In the days of the Soviet Union and its communist allies, older readers will remember the 'female' Soviet bloc field sportswomen and so there was also a tendency for the 'Soviet bloc' countries to vote for boxers of their allies. I cursorily inspected the records for the 1952 Olympics which show that of the bouts involving Soviet bloc and non-Soviet boxers, the former

won eight bouts to three; enough to arouse suspicion but not so much that anything could be proved before drug testing was prevalent. Percy came up against a Gheorghe Ilie of Romania and lost. One report suggested that there were a number of dubious boxing decisions and Percy's loss was one of them.



Milan 14 May 1951. European Amateur Boxing Championship.

LEWIS (England) (right) beats OZARI (Turkey).

While still in the RAF, Percy married Barbara from Oxford which cemented the local connection and they had two boys and a girl. After the RAF, Percy became a milkman and to assist with his training, would lift churns and run with them into colleges. He then had his own haulage business before opening a greengrocery in Kidlington. He later successfully owned three bookmakers' shops; two in Oxford and one in Eynsham. I remember him always looking prosperous, but that is often the way with bookmakers.

Percy had thirty bouts as a professional and first fought for the vacant Commonwealth {British Empire} Featherweight title against Nigerian Hogan 'Kid' Bassey on 1st April 1957 but lost on points. By 1959, the title was vacant and on 7th December, Percy knocked out John O'Brien at the Ice Rink, Nottingham. Percy had four successful defences of his title with the last against Floyd Robertson on 8th October 1960. Only seven weeks later, on 26th November 1960, he lost the title in the return match against Patterson. His last fight was on 9th June 1960 as a thirty one year old when he lost to Joe Tetteh in Accra. See the link: <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/accra-sees-big-fight>



Percy Lewis Signs Fight Contract

Trinbagonian boxer Percy Lewis (right) signs a fight contract at La Primavera restaurant in Frith Street, London, 19th July 1960.

Looking on are (left to right) matchmaker Jack Duncan, manager Jim 'The Bishop' Wicks and boxer Henry Cooper (1934 - 2011). The Super Featherweight match between Lewis and Billy Calvert of Sheffield took place on 19th August at the Winter Gardens, Banbury, and ended in a draw. (Photo by Keystone/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Percy was associated with OUABC from his earliest days as a professional. He trained and regularly sparred with the team; a testament to the extremely high standard of boxing in OUABC at the time.

Unlike the Ivy League or indeed, any universities in North America, coaches of Oxford sports teams are unsalaried and receive only expenses so it was fortunate that Percy was successful in business. After acting as official assistant coach to Alf Gallie from 1974, he took over in 1976 with Alf becoming assistant coach. Percy was successful as coach and OUABC won as many varsity matches as were lost. Percy won in 1986 (when Henry Dean had become assistant coach), the start of the incredible run of 16 victories in a row, a record in any Varsity sport. David Holmes succeeded as head coach in 1987 and in 1989 Henry Dean began his illustrious run of successes. Percy assisted Henry, and then Des Brackett into the 2000s, thus giving over 50 years' service to the club.



Percy with Alf Gallie.



Percy with the 1957 OUABC team in the less than palatial surroundings of the old OUABC gym in Alfred Street, near the Bear {with thanks to John Norton}.

L-R Simon Burrough, Alf, Tony Hewett, Graham Hall, Bob Atkinson, Terry Adams, Percy, John Norton, Keith Fitton, Peter Taunton, Alfie Xuma, Unsure, Bahman 'Bats' Batmangelidh

I was unfortunate to have only limited contact with Percy as he became assistant coach in my last year of boxing. Percy was quiet with a superficially relaxed demeanour which was derived from the absolute confidence which he had in his own ability. I always found him charming which is an ominous attribute in a boxer..... I only sparred with him a few times as I was usually being knocked about the ring by Steve Michaud, Bob Nairac, and Shane Fane-Hervey. I was good enough to see Percy in the ring when we sparred but never good enough to hit him.

Alf described Percy's party piece thus: He would put a piece of newspaper on the floor, stand on it and invite challengers to hit him. Percy would bob and weave and remain untouched. The newspaper of course, like Percy, remained pristine.



Cover of official programme from Percy's 1959 Title fight in Nottingham. Percy held aloft by Simon Burrough {1958, '59, and '60} with Malcolm Faber on the left {1960, '61, NS '62} after winning the fight {With thanks to Malcolm and Trevor Faber}.



PERCY LEWIS

Cinderella Man Lewis Can Shock 'Em !

by TOM PHILLIPS *Daily Herald Sports Columnist.*

GENIAL Jim Wicks, known among the fistic fraternity as the Bishop of Bermondsey, at all times the chap who brings joy to any assembly of people, has had one cause for frowning during 1959.

He is one of the "apples of his eye," a clever wily professor of boxing, Percy Lewis (33), of Trinidad, Empire featherweight champion. Mr. Wicks is morose whenever he remembers that "Our Perce," as he calls him has not had a contest this year until tonight at Nottingham Ice Rink.

Indeed, his last bout was against Carmelo Costa, the Brooklyn lightweight, in London on December 9th last year. Why? No manager, Mr. Wicks asserts, "wants to know" when our Perce's name is mentioned. One of the gentry who has suffered from deafness in the past is Mr. Sam Burns, manager of Bobby Neill the British champion. Mr. Wicks spent large sums on trunk calls and millions of words putting Our Perce's case for an Empire contest with Neill. Mr. Burns, as he was entitled to in his line of duty which is to protect his fighter's interests at all times, declared that Our Perce could wait because Bobby had other fish to fry first, such as meeting world champion Davey Moore, of Springfield, Ohio, and then defending his British title against Glasgow's John O'Brien.

This incensed Mr. Wicks. Never one for pulling his punches he immediately took counter steps to protect the interests of Our Perce at all times by putting the block on Neill.

"That Bobby Neill," bawled Mr. Wicks, "will never, never meet Lewis for the title. We have given him his chance and he has given us the brush off and it will do him no good at all to have avoided us."

Prophetic Mr. Wicks ! For Mr. Neill is summarily dismissed in two minutes fifty-five seconds of the first round at Wembley Pool in October by Mr. Moore who proved that his nickname, the Springfield Rifle, is a bull.

Mr. Moore, with some nifty sharpshooting, has Neill biting the dust five times before Referee Tommy Little stops the bout. Exit Mr Neill holding his head in his hands.

Instead of defending the British title against O'Brien, he is having a rest while Lewis has come out of enforced retirement to give O'Brien his chance of championship honours here tonight.

This is his sixth appearance in Nottingham Ice Rink out of 17 professional bouts since he left the amateur ranks in 1953 after a scintillating career. Always Lewis has been popular in Nottingham and he has justified his fans' loyalty by giving of his best.

Twice he has lost narrow, disputed decisions to Hogan Kid Bassey here. It was here, too, that he became Empire champion by stopping Charlie Hill on December 9th, 1957.

Manager George Biddles, Bassey's manager, told me in the presence of many famous American newspapermen in Los Angeles in the Spring of last year when Bassey was training for his title defence against "Little Bird" Moreno of Mexico, that he rated Percy very highly.

"Next to Bassey," said Mr. Biddles with the legalistic air which compelled the American writers to dub him the Sheriff of Nottingham, "Lewis is the best featherweight in the world."

Yet Mr. Biddles was always deaf to Mr. Wicks's long-playing record urging, pleadingly, plaintively, the claims of Our Perce for a world title bout with The Hon. Hogan, M.B.E. Instead the Kid from Calabar goes and loses his crown to Davey Moore and is again the loser when he gets his chance to snatch it back.

Mr. Wicks is adamant that Our Perce can show Mr. Moore is not the ebony executioner which certain people, including me, believe.

Mr. Wicks is determined to track Moore. So you can expect Our Perce to be the old wily fox tonight, all out to ensnare the young O'Brien into a knock-out trap.

The foregoing extract is from the match programme for Percy's fight against John O'Brien in Nottingham in December 1959 and makes fascinating reading {with thanks to Chris Mack}.

Everyone who came into contact with Percy recognised what a lovely man he was, with a twinkle in his eye and a wonderful, slightly mischievous, sense of humour. Late for training on a Sunday morning you would be greeted with '*Sermon went on a bit long did it...?*' Enough to make sure you were on time in future. He inspired generations of boxers both at OUABC and at several local clubs such as Eynsham where he also trained boxers for many years.

Percy was so well known in Oxford that he would receive mail addressed to 'Percy Lewis, Oxford'. And when Sam Neaman and Robin Duggan visited Percy in hospital a few years ago they were beckoned over by an old boy in another bed. 'Do you know who that is over there?' he whispered conspiratorially. 'That's Percy Lewis!'

As one Alumnus puts it 'Everyone loved Percy' who inspired real affection and camaraderie at the club. Several boxers have been heard to say 'Percy changed my life.'

After living in Eynsham for 25 years, Barbara died in 2017 by which time, Percy was suffering from dementia. He then moved to a home in Long Hanborough, supported by son Leon and daughter Leoniza. His Grandson, Bod, was an ABA champion and his granddaughter, Sasie, has recently taken up the sport. We look forward to seeing Sasie hitting the bag in the Gallie-Lewis-Dean Gym one day, named of course after her illustrious grandfather.

In line with data privacy laws, we have drafted a Privacy Policy <http://www.ouabc.com/> that tells you what we do with and why we hold your personal data - things like your name, email address, educational history and information related to your boxing career - as well as how you can amend, see or remove your data from our systems.

We have your details on our system because you have previously provided it to us to keep you abreast of OUABC-related events and developments. Therefore, we shall continue to provide you with such updates over email unless you email us to tell us to stop.

Edited and mistakes by: Peter W. Davies: peterwinder@icloud.com