



OUABC

Alumni Newsletter

Michaelmas
2023

Welcome to the Michaelmas 2023 edition

Sincerest apologies to all OUABC Alumni for this newsletter reaching you so late this term but there have been significant developments on a coaching level, and I wanted to be able to report on positive outcomes before sending out a newsletter. You will see the background in OUABC President David Seiferth's report below, but I'm pleased that, following a lot of hard work by the club committee, Alumni Association president Robin Duggan, and Vincent's Bursar David Butler, a long-list of potential head coaches has now been whittled down to two. Things are looking good for next term and March's Varsity Match.

Elsewhere in this edition there is a report on the very moving funeral of Terry Adams, a Q&A with recent club President Max Jenkins, and another of my book recommendations.

Mark Linehan

The OUABC Committee 2023-2024

President - David Seiferth
Vice President - Camila Seiferth
Secretary - Charlie James
Treasurer - George Garner
Women's Club Captain - Teresa Habib Meriggi
Women's Varsity Captain - Kaya Axelsson
Men's Club Captain - Rory Mitchell
Men's Varsity Captain - Roberto Lacourt

The Committee is supported by the following:

Social Secretaries - Éilish Farrelly and Yang Xu
Welfare Officers - Lara Mallin and Fatima El-Faki
Web-site - Michael Cheng
Alumni officer - Patrick Ryce

STATEMENT FROM THE OUABC PRESIDENT

On Wednesday 8th November 23, we received a verbal and written notification from our Head Coach, Dave Mace, stating his resignation as head coach of the OUABC. The committee has accepted Dave's resignation amicably and thank him again for his dedication to the club during the many years of service.

In light of health and safety and coaching regulations, we informed Iffley Road and suspended training for the next few days. For the same reasons, the Women's Boxing Show was postponed until later in the academic year. Women's boxing remains a priority to the OUABC.

Our Alumni have offered various forms of help and support and we are looking for a new coach. We would like to thank Sports Fed and our Alumni for their support and offers of assistance.

We are currently organising a training camp in Oxford to prepare everyone for Town vs Gown (Saturday 27th January 24) and the Varsity Match. We are inviting potential new coaches to training to give trial sessions. The first trial session was on 25th November in the GLD.

In general, training continues: we have fitness sessions at Iffley and on Headington hill. For sparring, carded boxers go to a local club close to Oxford. As long as we do not have a coach with a level 2 certificate, we cannot offer sparring at Iffley due to insurance reasons.

Our goal is to look after the best interests of the OUABC and fulfil our core mission and purpose; to win the Varsity Match.

David Seiferth, OUABC President

TERRY ADAMS - 1936-2023

You will know of the sad passing of Terry Adams in July this year and many OUABC alumni and coaches attended Terry's funeral in September, appropriately wearing blues blazers in tribute to one of the best boxers in the club's long and proud history. There have been many tributes to Terry - those given by his family at the funeral were incredibly moving and it was humbling to see how much OUABC meant to Terry and how grateful his family were for the support we were able to give him. Chris Mack was asked to give a eulogy on behalf of the club and, with permission from Terry's daughter and son, Fabienne and Tal, I have included it here:

"I would like to thank Fabienne and Tal for the honour of being able to pay tribute to Terry on behalf of Oxford University Amateur Boxing Club.

Terry was a supreme athlete. He played many sports at Oxford, including swimming for the University, but his first love was always boxing. He fought for Oxford University Amateur Boxing Club (OUABC) winning blues at light middle in 1955, 1956 (when he captained the winning team against Cambridge), 1957 and 1958. Terry was good. Terry was very, very good. In those days the team would fight many times a term, often in the town hall which would be packed with locals, so much so that the young boxers achieved celebrity status. OUABC also went on tours overseas and in all that time Terry only ever lost one bout, winning two Combined British Universities Championships along the way. What an incredible record! The OUABC trainer in those days was Alf Gallie who had taken the Great Britain team to the Helsinki Olympics in 1952, a team which included a certain Henry Cooper, and local boxer Percy Lewis. Percy went on to become a professional, and in 1957 Featherweight Champion of the British Empire. At that time Percy would come down to train at the club... and Terry would spar with him. Terry really was that good.

When I started at OUABC in 1985 Alf was still there, and Percy had become head coach. Inevitably they would talk about the great boxers they had trained over the years and one name always came up. Terry Adams. Alf and Percy both knew their boxing and said Terry was one of the finest ever to lace on a pair of gloves for the university. Mention any of this to Terry, however, and he would smile, nonchalantly brush it off, and claim they were being far too generous. Terry was one of the nicest, politest, most decent and (despite his talents) most modest men I have ever known.

Throughout his life Terry's enthusiasm and dedication to OUABC never wavered. He was a permanent fixture at Varsity Matches... indeed on the day of the fixture this year he came out of hospital and against medical advice insisted on going straight to the match, telling people with a smile 'they tried to stop me coming but I wouldn't let them!'

Equally, in nearly 40 years I never went to a Vincent's dinner where I didn't see Terry's cheery smile. And you could always be sure that as soon as an invite went out for any OUABC reunion, the first to book their place was Terry. None of these occasions will ever be the same without him.

What was amazing about Terry was his positive attitude. Always smiling, he had time for everyone, young and old. He encouraged the current boxers and would attend their training sessions even though he lived 60 miles away! Because of his indefatigable support for the club he was made the only ever Honorary Life President. And when the Alumni Association was recently reinvigorated there was only one candidate for the same position.

Terry was generous not just with his time but also financially. For example, when we were raising money for the Gallie-Lewis-Dean Gym he was immediately incredibly supportive, and it is more than fitting that his name is at the very top of the donor board. Terry also sponsored local boxers not at the university to train with the club on camps abroad, something they couldn't have done without Terry's support. But as was typical, Terry kept it quiet and hardly anyone even knew.

Terry was unique. As one Alumna simply put it a few years ago 'Everyone loves Terry.'

Terry will be making his final journey in his OUABC Blues Blazer and his Vincent's tie. He was known for an awesome left hook... I just hope God can duck!"

Also with permission, I thought you would like to see Terry's coffin being carried by a team of OUABC pallbearers and featuring the club badge.



Q&A WITH MAX JENKINS

I realise that the alumni featured in this section of the newsletter have tended to be from earlier times in the club's history, so I thought I should bring things right up to date for this edition! Max Jenkins was OUABC President in 2021/22 and Men's Captain the year before - difficult periods for the club due to COVID-19 and the cancelled 2022 Varsity Match - winning blues in 2020 and 2023. I met Max at Terry Adam's funeral and enjoyed chatting to him about his experiences at the club and thought he would be an excellent candidate for this section of the newsletter. I hope you agree.

What was your boxing experience before going up to Oxford?

At the age of 15, I began my boxing at Southampton ABC, where I trained for a couple of years and had two bouts. Tucked away in a residential area in Sholing, Southampton ABC may be a small club, but it harbours surprising talent and has a very welcoming atmosphere. It carries that distinctive scent inherent in every boxing club across the country—the mixture of used hand wraps and the inside of a sweaty boxing glove.

Notably, Southampton ABC has produced talents like Ryan Garner, who boasts a professional record of 14-0 and won the European Junior Championships in 2013 while training at the club. Although he probably won't recall our early bouts that coincided, I distinctly remember him throwing up his dinner between rounds, likely during his first match.

Subsequently, I had three bouts with Southampton University ABC, where I also served as Vice-President for a year. Despite being smaller than the Oxford club, we organized excellent shows in the student union, which was essentially a windowless sweatbox but felt like the Lion's Den during those shows.

How did you get involved with OUABC?

I started in my second year after spending a year telling myself that I was going to join whilst dossing around at formal dinners and enjoying the pubs. It was the best decision I've made but a year later than I should have.

Do you remember your first bout for OUABC?

My first bout with OUABC was with Zoran, former OUABC coach. I had sparred with Zoran a few times in training. He is a forward fighter who likes to cover up and go for the body. I think I managed to survive 3 rounds without breathing but won on points by split decision by keeping him at a distance with the jab and not getting into an all-out war.

What did you enjoy most about being part of OUABC?

Each year, the most rewarding aspect of being a part of OUABC has been the continuous learning experience from diverse sparring partners. The club sees a considerable turnover of boxers, adding an element of intrigue to discover who you'll be sparring with, particularly given the abundance of middleweights. Throughout my time at OUABC, the skill level of boxers has noticeably increased, reaching a point where arriving with a few bouts' worth of experience doesn't hold as much weight. My boxing has improved massively thanks to valuable sparring sessions with the likes of Roberto Lacourt, Ali Nasiri, Teddy Andrews, and others.

I would also like to mention the revival of the Oxford vs Sandhurst show in 2022, which was by far one of my favourite shows to have organised. Each bout was closely matched and we snatched a win right at the end. Hertford College Principal, Tom Fletcher, hosted the Sandhurst staff brilliantly and I hope we can get the show back again soon.

What did you enjoy least about being part of OUABC?

The least enjoyable aspect of my time with OUABC has been the occasional lapse in sportsmanship and breakdown in communication between the Oxford and Cambridge coaches. Unfortunately, this resulted in the regrettable cancellation of the Varsity event in 2022. Thanks to the diligent efforts of subsequent committees, matters have been rectified, and I am optimistic that moving forward we can cultivate agreeable yet fiercely competitive relations between the two sides. The boxers on both teams share a common desire for challenging bouts and a win, ideally capped off with a shared post-match beer.

Which was your toughest bout?

My most challenging bout was undoubtedly my debut Varsity match in 2020. To be honest, I underestimated the calibre of the Cambridge boxers, this particular boxer had a lot of prior experience and I wasn't as fit as I should have been having suffered an injury earlier in the year. It proved to be a steep learning curve, but ultimately, it was an enjoyable experience.

Who is or was your most difficult sparring partner?

Recently, my most challenging sparring partners have been Roberto and Ali. Roberto's elusive skills make it a rarity for me to land any punches, while he effortlessly lands at will. His mastery of feinting gets inside your head, making it easy pickings for him. As for Ali, I suspect he simply enjoys inflicting pain on his opponents, and no one's liver is safe from his combinations. The only consolation is that they are both lighter than me.

Apart from the above, what is your abiding memory of boxing at Oxford?

I know everyone probably gives the same answer here, but the camaraderie that you have with fellow boxers, particularly in the week before the Varsity match where you feel like you have been on a journey together. The shared sense of achievement at having worked extremely hard to get to where you are.

Will you box after you leave Oxford?

I plan to stay actively engaged with OUABC for as long as I'm here and have every intention to continue boxing. My eligibility for another Varsity by March is uncertain at this point. Nevertheless, I remain committed to competing and keeping the middleweights on their toes.

What are you doing these days?

Anything battery-related, whether that be boxing or energy storage! I have just started a post-doctorate position at the University. I am researching high-voltage cathode materials for sodium-ion batteries, working at pace to broaden an existing patent and secure some more IP. The contract is until March 2025 so I will have plenty of time to continue the boxing.

If you could give one piece of advice to boxers at OUABC today, what would it be?

The most challenging aspect of boxing lies in the activities outside of training. Achieving self-discipline and practicing temperance are crucial, and often prove to be the most difficult aspects to master.

Who is your favourite boxer of any era?

Gennadiy Gennadyevich Golovkin (GGG) stands out for his fighting style and resilience. His mastery as a pressure fighter, combined with a calculated and methodical approach to movement, is a style I aspire to emulate one day. Witnessing his ability to absorb and handle tremendous power, as evident in the Canelo vs. GGG trilogy is truly awe-inspiring.

Any other thoughts?

Having spent many years in education, I have genuinely found greater personal growth through boxing. The sport has been a powerful instructor in self-discipline, responsibility and confidence. Boxing imparts lessons that classrooms cannot teach and I firmly believe that everyone should have at least one bout and go through the brutal process of training to learn these characteristics for themselves.

Earning a boxing Blue has been a remarkable privilege and the OUABC community is unparalleled!



Max competing in the Town v Gown fixture earlier this year.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION - “FOUR KINGS” BY GEORGE KIMBALL

We all have our favourite eras of boxing. As a young boy, the rivalries and bouts involving Muhammed Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman seemed special, and they certainly were - but if I had to pick time when boxing hit a high that it has yet to match, it was the 1980s and a quartet of special but very different fighters: Roberto Duran, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Thomas Hearns and Sugar Ray Leonard. The story of each boxer and their bouts with each other - starting with Leonard-Duran I in 1980, ending with Leonard-Duran III in 1989 - is told by the author in detail with an insight that captures the era perfectly. The book is appended with the full record of each boxer and includes some great photos of them at their peak.

For anyone who hasn't seen it, and I can't imagine there are many, Hagler-Hearns in 1985 is - in my humble opinion - the greatest three rounds of professional boxing. Have a look on YouTube...

[Marvin Hagler vs Tommy Hearns | ON THIS DAY FREE FIGHT | GREATEST FIGHT OF ALL-TIME \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

ALUMNI NEWS

Many of you will know Dave McBride who won at heavyweight in 1987 and who has been featured in this newsletter before. Dave now has a book published - “The Nature of Honour” which will be available from 7th January 2024 and promises to be a fascinating read, including a chapter on OUABC and Percy Lewis.

[The Nature of Honour: Son, Duty-bound Soldier, Military Lawyer, Truth-teller, Father: Amazon.co.uk: McBride, David: 9781760897994: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/9781760897994)

This newsletter is for you, the alumni of OUABC. If there are any stories, news or updates on past boxers that you would like to share, please drop me an email at marklinehan64@yahoo.com