



## **50th Anniversary of Sir Roger Bannister's First Sub 4-Minute Mile**

Thursday 6th May 2004

Iffley Road Running Track,  
Oxford University Sports Complex



AAA of England



## 50th Anniversary of Sir Roger Bannister's First Sub 4-Minute Mile



Rodney Chamock



*Please convey my warm thanks to the Members of the Amateur Athletic Association of England for their message of loyal greetings sent on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Sir Roger Bannister's historic run to break the barrier of the four-minute mile.*

*The events of 6th May 1954 at Iffley Road, which are being restaged today, still serve as an inspiration to sportsmen and women everywhere. They recognise the remarkable dedication which attaining an extraordinary goal required, and which culminated in a landmark athletic performance that continues to capture the imagination these many years later.*

*As your patron, I wish all those taking part from the Amateur Athletic Association of England, the British Milers' Club and Oxford University, both past and present, a successful and enjoyable occasion to mark this great achievement.*

Elizabeth R

Buckingham Palace

The University is grateful to the late Norris McWhirter, CBE (Trinity 1943), author, broadcaster and an active athlete in his day, for his assistance in writing the main text of the Programme.



## Welcome

*The four-minute mile had been a goal for athletes since the nineteenth century. In 1953 John Landy, my Australian rival, who had run four times under 4-minute 3-seconds, said: '2 little seconds are not much, but when you're on the track those 15 yards seem solid and impenetrable, like a cement wall.' But as a medical student and physiologist I knew this could not be true. On 6 May, 50 years ago on a cold and windy cinder track my friends Chris Chataway and Chris Brasher helped me to break this 'insurmountable' barrier.*

*It may seem incredible today that this world record at this classic distance could be set by an amateur athlete, in bad weather, on a university running track. But I hope that it serves as an inspiration to sportsmen and women worldwide to keep striving to achieve their best through personal effort alone.*

*The fiftieth anniversary event and its planning owes much to the late Norris McWhirter, who had an incomparable knowledge and love of athletics. He was to me a staunch friend and many will miss him.*

*Roger Bannister*

Sir Roger Bannister

*Roger Bannister celebrates his victory with his two pacers, Chris Brasher (left) and Chris Chataway (right)*



## The Four-Minute Mile



*After a false start the race is on*

'I was met at the station by Charles Wenden who drove me to Iffley Road. The wind was almost at gale force. The St George's flag stood out from the flagpole. The attempt seemed hopeless, yet for some unknown reason I tried out both pairs of spikes.... Chris Chataway said, just as I knew he would: "The day could be a lot worse, couldn't it? Let's not decide until 5 o'clock."

No one tried to persuade me. The decision was mine alone. As we lined up for the start I glanced at the flag. It fluttered more gently. The attempt was on. There was complete silence on the ground ... a false start ... I felt angry that precious moments during the lull in the wind might be slipping by. The gun fired a second time ... Chris Brasher went into the lead and I slipped in effortlessly behind him. My legs seemed to meet no resistance at all, as if propelled by some unknown force.

We seemed to be going so slowly! But Brasher did not change the pace. I went on worrying until I heard the first lap time, 57.5 seconds. In the excitement my knowledge of pace had deserted me. Brasher could have run the first quarter in 55 seconds without my realising it, because I felt so full of running, but I should have had to pay for it later. Instead, he had made success possible.

I barely noticed the half-mile ... At three-quarters of a mile the effort was still barely perceptible: the time was 3 minutes 0.7 seconds, and by now the crowd was roaring. Somehow I had to run that last lap in 59 seconds. Chataway led round the next bend and then I pounced past him at the back straight.

I had a moment of mixed joy and anguish, when my mind took over. It raced ahead of my body and drew my body compellingly forward. There was no pain, only a great unity of movement and aim.

I felt at that moment that it was my chance to do one thing supremely well. The air I breathed filled me with the spirit of the track where I had run my first race. The noise in my ears was that of the faithful Oxford crowd. Their hope and encouragement gave me greater strength. I had now turned the last bend and there was only 50 yards more.

My body had long since exhausted all its energy, but it went on running just the same. The physical overdraft came only from greater willpower. This was the crucial moment when my legs were strong enough to carry me over the last few yards as they could never have done in previous years. With 5 yards to go the tape seemed almost to recede. Would I ever reach it?

Those last few seconds seemed never-ending. The faint line of the finishing tape stood ahead as a haven of peace. The arms of the world were waiting to receive me if only I reached the tape without slackening my speed. If I faltered, there would be no arms to hold me and the world would be a cold, forbidding place.

I knew that I had done it before I even heard the time. I was too close to have failed, unless my legs had played strange tricks at the end by slowing me down and not telling my tiring brain that they had done so.

The stopwatches held the answer. The announcement came – 'Result of one mile ... time, 3 minutes' – the rest lost in the roar of excitement. I grabbed Brasher and Chataway, and together we scampered round the track in a burst of spontaneous joy. We had done it – the three of us.'

From: *The First Four Minutes*, Roger Bannister  
50th Anniversary Edition, Sutton Publishing, 2004



## The Year 1954

## 6 May 1954 – The Race



Topham Picturepoint

*Fourteen years of food rationing in Britain ended at last*

The year 1954 was the year that the Independent Television Authority was set up. It was also the year that two Comet crashes, due to metal fatigue, destroyed our four-year lead in passenger jet aviation.

The USSR broke off diplomatic relations with Australia after Mme Vladimir Petrov, wife of their defecting third secretary in Canberra, was rescued at Darwin Airport from two strong-arm Soviet escorts who were trying to force her back to Russia.

The French suffered a military debacle at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam, when the last French outpost surrendered after a 55-day siege by the Vietminh. In the seven-year conflict the French sustained 253,000 casualties. The final Algerian insurrection, however, broke out on 31 October. At Westminster the £1,000-a-year MPs first received a £2 a day attendance allowance. The Minister of Agriculture, Sir Thomas Dugdale MP, resigned over the compulsory purchase order imposed on the 725-acre Crichel Down, Dorset.

Senator Joseph McCarthy, Chairman of the Senate sub-committee on un-American activities, lost his former power

*HM The Queen made her first voyage in the brand new royal yacht, Britannia, on the last leg of her Commonwealth world tour*



Topham Picturepoint

after judicial hearings condemned him for having 'acted contrary to Senatorial ethics...'. The world population reached 2,612 million (as opposed to 6,320 million in 2004), while that of the UK was 50,370,000 (it is now nudging 60,000,000). In 1954 wages rose 4.5 per cent compared with the 3 per cent rise in the cost of living. A pint of beer was then still 1s 3d (6p). The NHS cost £427 million (in 2004 this figure is £82,200 million). The purpose-built pioneering Kidbrooke Comprehensive School opened in London.

The American evangelist, Billy Graham, spent three months in England and filled Wembley Stadium to its 120,000 capacity. The world's first atomic powered vessel – the US submarine *Nautilus* was launched by Mrs Mamie Eisenhower. The UK was still the world's largest shipbuilder. The first vertical takeoff jet flew, while in France the speed record on rails was raised to 152mph (244.5km/h). The Ford Popular was advertised at £390 and fuel injection began to become standard. The French set a new ocean depth record off Dakar, with 13,287 feet (4,050m).

At Oklahoma City the KWTV mast at 1,572ft (497m) became the world's tallest structure and at J Lyons and Co the computer, Leo, did the work of 200 clerks in raising 33,000 wage slips in less than 60 minutes.

Two new elements, Einsteinium (99) and Fermium (100) were created by the US Atomic Energy Commission. The scientist Enrico Fermi, who launched the age of the atom with the first controlled reaction in 1942, died in 1954. Others of distinction who died that year were:- Hugo Eckner (Ger), pilot of *Graf Zeppelin* airship on her round-the-world flight of 1929; August Lumière (Fr), pioneer of the cinema in Paris in 1894; Henri Matisse (Fr) painter and leader of *Les Fauves* (wild beasts) from 1905; and Andrei Vyshinsky (USSR) Public Prosecutor at Stalin's state show trials of 1936-38.

1954 witnessed a number of significant and symbolic events worldwide which affected the way we live our lives today. Roger Bannister's achievement must be placed amongst these.

*Juan Fangio (Argentina) won the second of his five world driving championships*



Topham Picturepoint



Rodney Chamock

The scene at this very site, half a century ago today, was one involving only 1,200 people. It was dark and squally with St George's flag straining at the halyards atop Iffley Church tower. The crowd was vaguely expectant because a chap called Bannister was said to be running. Suddenly at 5.55 pm the wind dropped, a double rainbow formed and the light-level improved. Event Number Nine was called. Out came the American, George Dole (Univ), Alan Gordon (Magdalen) and Bill Hulatt from Alfreton, Staffordshire. Representing the Amateur Athletic Association, out came Bannister (Exeter and Merton), Chris Brasher, formerly of St John's Cambridge and Chris Chataway, formerly of Magdalen.

The 1948 Olympic hurdler, Ray Barkway (Exeter), acting as the starter, raised his gun. The late Chris Brasher, two years later to become Olympic steeplechase gold medallist, broke and was recalled. At the second time of asking, the field of six was off. Brasher, as planned, led through the first and second laps in 57.4 and 60.6 seconds, with Bannister second and Chataway third. Chataway, later to become the world 5,000 metre record holder, now took over the lead and reached the bell in 3min 0.7sec with Bannister lying a close second. In the middle of the back straight Bannister moved decisively past the barrel-chested redhead and flashed past a lone timer at the 1500 metre mark, where he was caught in a world record-equalling 3min 43sec. Could he hold on for the 17 seconds that he had left? White and drawn, he was down to the embers of his energy. His rhythmic stride never faltered and he went through the worsted and into the arms of the later Olympic 200 metre semi-finalist, the Rev Nicholas Stacey (St Edmund Hall). His first gasping question was, 'Did I do it?'. The answer came from the coach of Chataway and Brasher, Franz Stampfl, – 'I think so'. The official time-keepers were in a huddle. The track was invaded.

Then came the public address announcement, from the announcer, the late Norris McWhirter:

'Ladies and Gentlemen. Here is the result of Event Number Nine, the One Mile. First, number 41, R G Bannister (Amateur Athletic Association, formerly of Exeter and Merton Colleges) with a time which is a new meeting and track record and, which subject to ratification, will be a new English native, British national, British allcomers', European, British Commonwealth and World's record – the time, three minutes ...' (The 59.4 seconds was lost in the uproar)

History had been made. Bannister did not even know that his parents had travelled from Harrow in the hope of witnessing

an exciting outcome in his first major fixture of the new British outdoor season. With his pulse now receding from its 155 peak and his colour vision returning, Bannister duly thanked the two Chrises for their part in the race and the groundsman, Walter Morris. He was driven back to Vincent's Club by the late Ross McWhirter where, according to popular press report, he had a glass of champagne. In reality he had a more pedestrian and less palatable glass of water containing a reparative dash of sugar and salt. The hero of the moment was whisked off to the BBC's Lime Grove TV Studio, London in 65 minutes. There he gave an interview of adroit modesty. In a quiet corner of the Royal Court Club, London, at 1.45 am late that night, the new world record holder confided 'I had no idea it would be so difficult.'

*Chris Brasher, as planned, led through the first and second laps*



Newsquest (Oxfordshire) Ltd

*Through the tape*



Newsquest (Oxfordshire) Ltd

## The Magic Mile – Historical Overview



Paavo Nurmi

It was in 1925 that the press began to muse seriously over whether or not running a mile in four minutes was within human compass. Even the Flying Finn, Paavo Nurmi, would have been more than 70 yards short of the tape as the magic four minutes ticked past. It was surely impossible.

After all, even then running over the distance of a statute mile (1609.34m) dated back almost a century. The mile was the noblest of distances. Competing demanded not merely speed and endurance, but determination and tactical adroitness. The earliest reliably recorded breaking of 4½ minutes for the mile anywhere in the world was achieved in the grounds of Copenhagen House, north London on 26 July 1852. The hero was the 20-year-old Charles Westhall who ran the distance in 4min 28sec. He was one of the professionals that Victorians knew as pedestrians or 'peds'.

By the time of the inauguration of the world's first and oldest annual meeting between Oxford and Cambridge Universities on the Christ Church cricket ground at Iffley Road, Oxford on 5 March 1864, the world's best performance had been improved by more than six seconds to 4min 21½sec. This mark had been set in the previous summer by another professional, William Lang, 25, at the City Grounds, Manchester on an 800 yard cinder track. The world's best performance by an amateur at the time, was 4min 33sec by the Irishman, George Farren, in the Dublin University sports at the Old Trinity ground on 23 May 1862.

The first winner of the Inter-Varsity mile was Charles B Lawes, later the stroke in the 1865 Cambridge boat race crew. He was also the winner of the English (or AAC) Championships, which he won in 1866 by four yards in 4min 56sec. He inherited a baronetcy and exhibited his sculptures at the Royal Academy for nearly 40 years. The meeting record rapidly

improved with 4min 44½sec by Richard Webster (Cambridge) 1865, 4min 40.4sec by Samuel Scott (Magdalen, Oxford) 1867, who went on to take the English title the same year, and 4min 31½sec by William Gibbs (Cambridge) in 1868. In 1873 at Lillie Bridge, London, Charles Gunton of Cambridge broke 4½ minutes with 4min 28.6sec. This only lasted for three years when Edward Nicholls (Christ Church) ran the world's fastest time of the year of 1876 with 4min 27.2sec.

Oxford's early contribution to miling was perpetuated by Arnold Hills (Univ), who took the AAC title in 1878; Bernhard Wise (Queen's), who took the 1881 AAA title in 4min 24.4sec; while in 1887 the tall Rev Francis Cross (New College) won both the AAA 880 yards and 1 mile title, and in the following year set a world's best time for the former distance with 1min 54.4sec when running in the Wadham College Strangers race here on the old Iffley track.

Oxford's next great mile runner was Charles Henderson-Hamilton (Trinity), whose 4min 17.8sec at Queen's Club, London, winning by eight yards against Cambridge, was a world's best for the year 1905. He was killed at Gallipoli in 1915, but his time lasted as an Inter-Varsity mile record until 1949 when Roger Bannister clipped 1.6sec from it running at White City, London.

By the turn of the 19th century Great Britain had been put into the forefront of miling, due to the famous 4min 12½sec professional time put up by the Wiltshire-born Walter Goodall George in London in 1886. This was unbeaten anywhere in the world for the next twenty-eight seasons. The man who shaved a mere 15 hundredths of a second or about one yard off it was an American Oxonian, Norman Taber, who had been well beaten in 880 yards in the Inter-University Sports of 1914 at Queen's Club, London – the last before these were suspended for six years due to World War I. Taber had however already secured an Olympic Gold Medal in the 3000 metres team event at Stockholm in 1912 when running for the USA.

It was at these games in 1912 that the Oxford tradition for world class miling was re-established. Arnold Strode-Jackson cut his fishing holiday in Norway short to take the train to Stockholm to represent Great Britain, albeit wearing Oxford blue trimmed shorts. Of the 14 who qualified for the final of

Arnold Strode-Jackson



Sydney Wooderson

the 1500 metres, seven were Americans and included both the mile (John Paul Jones) and the 1500 metres (Abel Kiviat) world record holders. The only other Briton in the race was the subsequent Nobel Prize winner, Philip Noel-Baker (Cambridge), who finished sixth. Strode-Jackson swept past the flagging Americans over the closing yards, to win the gold medal in the Olympic record of 3min 56.8seconds. Both Strode-Jackson and Noel-Baker (who won Olympic silver in 1920) were founders of the Achilles Club.

After this, world miling primacy eluded Great Britain until August 1937 when Sydney Wooderson set a world record 4min 6.4sec at Motspur Park, London in a paced race.

The four inter-War middle distance champions who improved on Taber's mark and on each other, were first, the Flying Finn, Paavo Nurmi, who, running in Stockholm returned 4min 10.4sec, which lasted eight years as a world record until late in 1931. Then the Frenchman, Jules Ladoumégue at last broke the 4min 10sec barrier by eight-tenths of a second in Paris. Oxford was back on the scene less than two years later when Dr Jack Lovelock (Exeter), the slightly built 9½ stone blond New Zealander startled the Americans with his 4min 7.6sec in the Palmer Stadium at Princeton, New Jersey against the highly touted Bill Bonthron (USA). The Americans came back the next year on the same track when Glenn Cunningham, known, among sports' writers as 'The Iron Horse of Kansas', posted 4min 6.7sec. It was his time from which Wooderson removed three-tenths of a second at Motspur Park, London in 1937.

World War II generally asphyxiated competitive sport for six years 1939–45, except in a few pockets such as neutral Sweden. There the two greatest milers of their era, lumberjack and fireman, Gunder Hägg and schoolmaster, Arne Andersson went head-to-head six times between 1942–5 in Göteborg, Stockholm and Malmö, with the velvet smooth Hägg ending up three-tenths of a second the faster with his epic 4min 1.3sec in Malmö on 17 July 1945 – the day after the world's first atomic test explosion in New Mexico.

Thus the scene was set for the next nine seasons in seeing who, if anyone, could first run eight yards faster than even Hägg. By the start of the southern hemisphere season of 1953–4 there were three credible contenders for this lodestar of athletic immortality – John Landy of Australia, who is now the Governor of Victoria State; Wes Santee (USA) a retired US Marine Corps Colonel; and the medical student, Roger Bannister (GB) who had transferred from Exeter College to Merton College and then to St Mary's Hospital Medical School, London.

Landy, on his return from the Helsinki Olympics of 1952 reduced his best mile from 4min 10sec to 4min 2.1sec in one fell swoop. In 1953 he shaved another tenth off. Thus the world's fastest miles in those nine seasons were:

1946	4:06.6	Lennart Strand	(Sweden)
1947	4:07.0	Lennart Strand	(Sweden)
1948	4:08.8	Gil Dodds	(USA)
1949	4:05.4	Olle Åberg	(Sweden)
1950	4:06.2	Gaston Reiff	(Belgium)
1951	4:07.8	Roger Bannister	(GB)
1952	4:02.1	John Landy	(Australia)
1953	4:02.0	John Landy	(Australia)

Santee had also come within less than three seconds of the elusive four minute barrier, but unlike Landy, never in fact in the end succeeded in breaking the barrier.

John Landy





# Timetable

2:40 pm Guests to take their seats  
 3:00 pm Exchange of Pennants between Captains  
 3:05 pm Men's 110m Hurdles  
 3:05 pm Women's Shot Putt  
 3:15 pm One Mile 1 – Women's 'B' Race  
 3:30 pm Women's High Jump  
 3:30 pm One Mile 2 – Men's 'C' Race  
 3:45 pm Women's 100m  
 3:50 pm Men's Shot Putt  
 3:55 pm Men's 100m  
 4:05 pm One Mile 3 – Junior Women  
 4:20 pm One Mile 4 – Junior Men  
 4:30 pm Men's High Jump  
 4:35 pm Women's 400m  
 4:45 pm Men's 400m  
 4:55 pm One Mile 5 – Men's 'B' Race  
 5:10 pm Women's 200m  
 5:20 pm Men's 200m  
 5:30 pm Women's Elite Mile  
 5:45 pm Presentation of the first Oxford University Bannister Medal  
 6:00 pm Men's Elite Mile

**Meeting Manager:**  
 Andrew Clatworthy

**Announcers:**  
 Peter Matthews  
 Paul Dickenson

**Field Referee:**  
 Keith Davies

**Field Judges:**  
 Ros Alterman, John Bayley,  
 Mike Burrell, Brian Emptage,  
 Mike Parmiter, Sue Parmiter,  
 Barrie Strange, Margaret Strange

**Chief Photofinish:**  
 David Littlewood

**Photofinish:**  
 Linda Turner, John Vickers

**Chief Timekeeper:**  
 Alan Vincent

**Timekeepers:**  
 Graham Bentley, Brian Blake,  
 Stan Burton, Alan Edwards,  
 Nick Folwell, Charlie Kear,  
 Paul Langston, Alan Tyler

**Track Referee:**  
 John Tanner

**Track Judges:**  
 Jeanne Coker, John How,  
 Eileen Kear, John Peerless,  
 John Sear

**Chief Starter:**  
 Don Vickers

**Starter:**  
 Mike Stubbs

**Chief Marksman:**  
 Andy Glover

**Marksmen:**  
 Keith Dearing, Maurice Skermer

**BMC Race Organisers:**  
 Tim Brennan, Liam Cain,  
 Les Crouch, Pat Fitzgerald,  
 Matthew Fraser Moat, Tim Grose,  
 Rod Lock, Steve Mosley,  
 Norman Poole, Philip O'Dell

**3:15 pm One Mile 1 – Women's 'B' Race**

121. Veronica Boden (BMC)
  122. Hattie Dean (BMC)
  123. Esther Evans (BMC)
  124. Genni Gardner (BMC)
  125. Lucy Hasell (BMC)
- 126 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

**3:30 pm Women's High Jump**

1. Ailsa Wallace (OUAC)
2. Danielle Fidge (OUAC)
3. Stephanie Higham (AAA)
4. Dominique Blaize (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Height .....

**3:30 pm One Mile 2 – Men's 'C' Race**

51. Paul Freary (BMC)
  52. John Hutchins (BMC)
  53. Kojo Kyereme (BMC)
  54. Paul Laslett (BMC)
  55. Adrian McGarva (BMC)
  56. Tom Naylor (BMC)
  57. Chris Smith (BMC)
- 58 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

**3:45 pm Women's 100m**

1. Helen Edmundson (OUAC)
2. Katy Whear (OUAC)
3. Anyika Onuora (AAA)
4. Kadi-Ann Thomas (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

**3:50 pm Men's Shot Putt**

1. Stephen McCauley (OUAC)
2. Tom Hayman (OUAC)
3. Chris Gearing (AAA)
4. Greg Beard (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Distance .....

**3:55 pm Men's 100m**

1. Finlay Wright (OUAC)
2. Toleme Ezekiel (OUAC)
3. Leon Baptiste (AAA)
4. Andrew Matthews (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

**4:05 pm One Mile 3 – Junior Women**

171. Hannah England (BMC)
  172. Sarah Hopkinson (BMC)
  173. Tara Paisey (BMC)
  174. Emma Pallant (BMC)
  175. Emily Pidgeon (BMC)
  176. Carolyn Plateau (BMC)
  177. Sara Ponsford (BMC)
  178. Josephine Rhodes (BMC)
  179. Non Stanford (BMC)
- 180 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

**4:20 pm One Mile 4 – Junior Men**

71. David Bishop (BMC)
  72. Mark Buckingham (BMC)
  73. Lewis Cadman (BMC)
  74. James Ellis (BMC)
  75. Peter Emmett (BMC)
  76. Paul Erwood (BMC)
  77. Alex Felce (BMC)
  78. Steven Fennell (BMC)
  79. Chris Gillespie (BMC)
  80. Ben Harding (BMC)
  81. Chris Hart (BMC)
  82. Craig Ivemy (BMC)
  83. Rob Mullett (BMC)
  84. Jonathan Randle (BMC)
  85. Sam Walsh (BMC)
  86. Matt Warley (BMC)
  87. Matt Wood (BMC)
- 88 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

## Match Programme

**3:00 pm Exchange of Pennants between Captains**  
 Fraser Thompson  
 Captain, Oxford University Athletic Club  
 Amy Spencer  
 Captain, Amateur Athletic Association of England  
 Matt Shone, on behalf of the British Milers' Club

**3:05 pm Men's 110m Hurdles**  
 1. Richard Sear (OUAC)  
 2. Richard Baderin (OUAC)  
 3. Richard Alleyne (AAA)  
 4. Tristan Anthony (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

**3:05 pm Women's Shot Putt**  
 1. Jenny Duff (OUAC)  
 2. Rota Vavilova (OUAC)  
 3. Rebecca Peake (AAA)  
 4. Paula Hendriks (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Distance .....





## To Bring Matters up to Date

### 4:30 pm Men's High Jump

1. James Brierley (OUAC)
2. Sean Gourley (OUAC)
3. Tom Parsons (AAA)
4. Mark Crowley (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Height .....

### 4:35 pm Women's 400m

1. Sophie Scamps (OUAC)
2. Elizabeth Brathwaite (OUAC)
3. Marilyn Okoro (AAA)
4. Christine Ohuruogo (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

### 4:45 pm Men's 400m

1. Jonan Boto (OUAC)
2. Michael Lokale (OUAC)
3. Adam Charlton (AAA)
4. Robert Tobin (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

### 4:55 pm One Mile 5 – Men's 'B' Race

21. Sam Aldridge (BMC)
22. Clayton Bannon (BMC)
23. Robert Cole (BMC)
24. Rod Finch (BMC)
25. Rob Hooten (BMC)
26. Lee Merrien (BMC)
27. Ben Moreau (BMC)
28. Ben Tickner (BMC)
- 29 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

### 5:10 pm Women's 200m

1. Helen Edmundson (OUAC)
2. Katy Whear (OUAC)
3. Amy Spencer (AAA)
4. Montell Douglas (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

### 5:20 pm Men's 200m

1. Finlay Wright (OUAC)
2. Toleme Ezekiel (OUAC)
3. Jamahl Alert-Khan (AAA)
4. James Ellington (AAA)

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

### 5:30 pm Women's Elite Mile

1. Emily Crowley (OUAC)
2. Clare Martin (OUAC)
5. Kelley Wilder (OUAC)
3. Tina Brown (AAA)
4. Faye Fullerton (AAA)
6. Ellen Leggate (AAA)
111. Georgie Clarke (Australia)
112. Catherine Dugdale (BMC)
113. Sonia O'Sullivan (Ireland)
- 114 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

### 6:00 pm Men's Elite Mile

1. Fraser Thompson (OUAC)
2. Andrew Hennessy (OUAC)
5. Nick Talbot (OUAC)
3. John Mayock (AAA)
4. Mohamed Farah (AAA)
6. Richard Ward (AAA)
11. Andy Baddeley (BMC)
12. Matthew Barnes (BMC)
13. Aaron Lanzel (USA)
14. Daniel Komen (Kenya)
15. Craig Mottram (Australia)
16. Steve Sharp (BMC)
17. Matt Shone (BMC)
18. Michael Skinner (BMC)
- 19 onwards – representatives of the BMC

1st .....  
 2nd .....  
 3rd .....  
 Time .....

Since the running days of Roger Bannister and John Landy, no less than 962 other athletes have, up to January 2004, bettered four minutes for the mile.

Three athletes have now run sub-four-minute miles on more than 100 occasions in their careers:-

Steve Scott (USA)	141
John Walker (NZ)	130
Marcus O'Sullivan (Irl)	101

Britain's most prolific performers have been Steve Cram (34), Steve Ovett (32) and Peter Elliott (31).

The best year for sub-four-minute miles has been 1991 when 40 athletes achieved the feat. No less than 60 countries now have national records below four minutes. These include Burundi, Iceland and Luxembourg.

It should be noted that by the 50th anniversary of the conquest of Everest on 29 May 2003, it had been climbed by some 1,200 mountaineers. On 23 May 2001 no less than 89 climbers attained the 29,035ft (8850m) high summit on one day. There have been 75 female conquerors. Do we say that no woman will ever attain 4 minutes for the mile? The ratified record today is 4min 12.56sec by Svetlana Masterkova (Russia) set in Zurich on 14 August 1996. They will have to improve thus by more than 21 yards for each of the four laps to achieve 4 minutes.

The greatest miler of all time is Hicham El Guerrouj of Morocco, whose top ten performance average is an astounding 3min 45.8sec, including a unique four performances under 3min 45sec, among which of course is his now nearly five year old world record of 3min 43.13sec, set in Rome on 7 July 1999.

Perhaps the single most poignant question in the inexorable march of human performance would be to ask: 'When will someone first run two miles in under eight minutes?' In 1954 the answer would have been 'Never'. The correct answer would have been 'In 1997', for it was in that year on 19 July that the 21 year old Kenyan, Daniel Komen, running at Hechtel, Belgium, returned a time of 7min 58.61sec for two miles. He has never been truly lauded as a world famous athlete but then life never has been fair, particularly in sport!

*(Many data from 'Track Stats', recorded by the late Bob Sparks (1937-2003) and Ian R Smith of the National Union of Track Statisticians)*



Peter Elliott



Daniel Komen



# World Record Holders for One Mile

*19 August 1865	William Lang (GB) William Richards (GB)	Manchester, England	4min 17½secs
23 August 1885	Walter George (GB)	London, England	4min 12½secs
16 July 1915	Norman Taber (US)	Cambridge, USA	4min 12.6sec
23 August 1923	Paavo Nurmi (Fin)	Stockholm, Sweden	4min 10.4sec
4 Oct 1931	Jules Ladoumègue (Fr)	Paris, France	4min 9.2sec
15 July 1933	Jack Lovelock (NZ)	Princeton, USA	4min 7.6sec
16 June 1934	Glenn Cunningham (US)	Princeton, USA	4min 6.7sec
28 August 1937	Sydney Wooderson (GB)	London, England	4min 6.4sec
1 July 1942	Gunder Hägg (Swe)	Göteborg, Sweden	4min 6.2sec
10 July 1942	Arne Andersson (Swe)	Stockholm, Sweden	4min 6.2sec
4 September 1942	Gunder Hägg (Swe)	Stockholm, Sweden	4min 4.6sec
12 July 1943	Arne Andersson (Swe)	Göteborg, Sweden	4min 2.6sec
18 July 1944	Arne Andersson (Swe)	Malmö, Sweden	4min 1.6sec
17 July 1945	Gunder Hägg (Swe)	Malmö, Sweden	4min 1.3sec
6 May 1954	Roger Bannister (GB)	Oxford, England	3min 59.4sec
21 June 1954	John Landy (Aus)	Turku, Finland	3min 57.9sec
19 July 1957	Derek Ibbotson (GB)	London, England	3min 57.2sec
6 August 1958	Herb Elliott (Aus)	Dublin, Ireland	3min 54.5sec
27 January 1962	Peter Snell (NZ)	Wanganui, New Zealand	3min 54.4sec
17 November 1964	Peter Snell (NZ)	Auckland, New Zealand	3min 54.1sec
9 June 1965	Michel Jazy (Fr)	Rennes, France	3min 53.6sec
17 July 1966	Jim Ryun (US)	Berkeley, USA	3min 51.3sec
23 June 1967	Jim Ryun (US)	Bakersfield, USA	3min 51.1sec
17 May 1975	Filbert Bayi (Tanz)	Kingston, Jamaica	3min 51.0sec
12 August 1975	John Walker (NZ)	Göteborg, Sweden	3min 49.4sec
17 July 1979	Sebastian Coe (GB)	Oslo, Norway	3min 49.0sec
1 July 1980	Steve Ovett (GB)	Oslo, Norway	3min 48.8sec
19 August 1981	Sebastian Coe (GB)	Zurich, Switzerland	3min 48.53sec
26 August 1981	Steve Ovett (GB)	Koblenz, West Germany	3min 48.40sec
28 August 1981	Sebastian Coe (GB)	Brussels, Belgium	3min 47.33sec
27 July 1985	Steve Cram (GB)	Oslo, Norway	3min 46.31sec
5 Sept 1993	Noureddine Morceli (Alg)	Rieti, Italy	3min 44.39sec
7 July 1999	Hicham El Guerrouj (Mor)	Rome, Italy	3min 43.13sec

\* Professional event (dead heat)



Jules Ladoumègue (Fr)



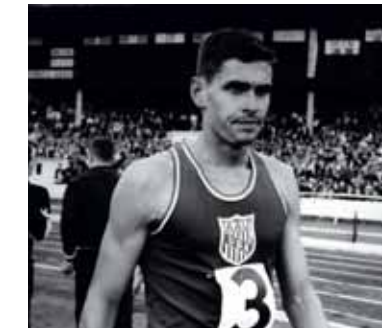
Derek Ibbotson (GB)



Herb Elliott (Aus)



Michel Jazy (Fr)



Jim Ryun (US)



Filbert Bayi (Tanz)



John Walker (NZ)



Sebastian Coe (GB)



Steve Ovett (GB)



Steve Cram (GB)



Noureddine Morceli (Alg)



Hicham El Guerrouj (Mor)



## Athletic Clubs

### Oxford University Athletic Club



Oxford University Athletic Club (OUAC), founded in October 1860, is the oldest athletic club in the world. Running events had been held in Oxford since the late 1840s, and the first official athletics meeting was organised by Exeter College in 1850. Subsequently, events organised by OUAC dominated the sport worldwide. In 1864, the annual Varsity Athletics Match between Oxford and Cambridge began with a meeting on the Christ Church cricket field. The 130th event is due to take place this year. In 1880, as a result of OUAC initiatives, the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) was founded at a meeting held in the Randolph Hotel in Oxford. The first overseas international athletics meeting took place in 1894 between Oxford and Yale Universities.

Beyond pioneering the first modern athletics events, OUAC continued to play a pivotal, ongoing role in the evolution and growth of the sport, producing some of the world's greatest athletes. Members of OUAC have gone on to achieve 20 world records, eight Olympic gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals. Over the years they have won 162 AAA titles. The club's influence on the sport can be summarised by the fact that, for much of the first 100 years of its existence, the President of the AAA had been a member of the OUAC.

The Iffley Road sports ground became the home of OUAC in the early 1880s. It had a three-laps-to-the-mile cinder track with a nine-foot drop on the back straight where competitors almost went out of sight before climbing the hill to the finish! Furthermore, the runners ran clockwise – the opposite way around to today.

In 1892, C B Fry, a brilliant all-round sportsman, set a world record at Iffley Road – 23ft 6½in (7.17m) for the long jump, while the finest running achievement prior to Roger Bannister's was probably freshman Jack Lovelock's British Empire mile record of 4min 12.0sec set in 1932 on the old track.

Roger Bannister, during this year as President of OUAC in 1948–9, was responsible for organising the upgrading of the Iffley Road facilities to the flat, four-laps-to-the-mile track in use today and upon which, some five years later, he was to achieve the greatest of all performances by an OUAC member.

Today, the OUAC remains one of Britain's top university teams and is an active, successful club whose members take inspiration from the club's role in the development of the sport and the legendary athletes who have gone before them.

John De'Ath  
Senior Trustee

### The Amateur Athletic Association of England



#### AAA of England

By the late nineteenth century, with the upsurge of interest in athletics amongst the working class men of the North and Midlands, athletics was no longer the exclusive pastime of a few enthusiasts from London and the universities. In 1880, Clement Jackson a tutor at Hertford College, Bernhard Wise, President of Oxford University Athletic Club (OUAC) and Montague Shearman, a former President of OUAC, recognised the need for a single body to legislate and govern the sport in England. Following a meeting on 24 April at the Randolph Hotel, Oxford, the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) was formed with the aim of holding annual Championships; improving management of athletic meetings; and promoting uniformity of its rules.

The first Championships were held at Lillie Bridge, London on 3 July 1880 and from the start they were open to the world. By 1900, the roll of medal-winners took in five continents and the AAA was a pace-setter in international athletics.

In 1912, the AAA continued to ensure the development of the sport with the introduction of a coaching scheme. After the First World War interest in athletics exploded; new clubs were affiliating at a rate of 100 a year, and regular international matches were introduced into the athletic calendar. Athletics had become a major national and international sport. School leavers and demobilised forces looked to sport and particularly athletics as a way of sustaining their fitness. The County Associations came into being to provide a closer contact with clubs and additional competition opportunities.

In 1922, with the formation of the Women's AAA (which had unofficially taken place under AAA auspices since 1907), formal recognition of women's athletics was established. This body governed the sport for women in England alongside the AAA.

The Championships thrived and were extended to include Juniors (1931), Indoor Championships (1935) and in the late fifties televised and sponsored events. The early Championships always attracted large crowds and a record attendance of more than 52,000 attended the 1952 Championships at White City.

In 1991 the AAA and WAAA amalgamated to form the AAA of England enabling one governing body to manage athletics in England.

Sir Rodney Walker  
President

### British Milers' Club



Founded: 1963

After Derek Ibbotson's (GB) world mile record of 3min 57.2 sec set in London on 19th July 1957, there was a major decline in British miling standards, so much so, that in 1963 Great Britain as a miling nation were ranked fifth in Europe. Following much criticism in the letters columns of athletics journals, one letter appeared calling for the formation of a British Milers' Club (BMC) to stem the decline. A few stalwarts met at the office of Alf Wilkins at Margaret Street, W1 and formed a steering committee, inviting Roger Bannister to act as President and Gordon Pirie as Vice-President. The objects of the club were to raise British miling to world supremacy and to increase the knowledge of those interested in this goal. The *modus operandi* was:

1. To create regional secretaries who must be senior AAA coaches, responsible for organising fast, paced mile races in the area, plus weekend training camps and all-club training days (Sundays);
2. Membership of the BMC was restricted to those who had achieved the following times: Senior men – 4min 20 secs; Junior men – 4 min 30 secs; Youths – 4 min 50 secs; Females (All age groups) – 5 min 20 secs;
3. The establishment of an annual training/educational residential weekend;
4. The production of a twice yearly journal – *The BMC News*;

The first big breakthrough was in 1965, when three BMC members got together in the Inter-Counties mile to break Derek Ibbotson's UK mile record and Alan Simpson (Rotherham) aided by Bill McKim (Kettering) and Andy Green (Thundersley), succeeded. In 1969, John Whetton (Notts) won the European Championships 1500 metres. John had frequently run in BMC races around the country.

At BMC young athletics' weekends some youngsters of note appeared: Dave Bedford, Brendan Foster, Dave Moorcroft, Steve Ovet and Seb Coe. They all competed and improved their times in BMC races and what they achieved is now history. In their memoirs, all paid tribute to the work of the BMC. There is still much to do; we succeeded once and we'll succeed again.

Frank Horwill and Alf Wilkins  
Co-founders

### The Achilles Club



The Achilles Club, which traces its roots back to the first Varsity Sports of 1864, was formed in 1920 by and for past and present members of Oxford University Athletics Club (OUAC) and Cambridge University Athletics Club (CUAC). Members have won 19 Olympic Gold Medals (most recently Stephanie Cook, reigning Olympic Champion in the modern pentathlon), and held 39 World Records.

In the amateur age between the two World Wars, the Club was the strongest in Britain. Its members enjoyed more opportunity for training than most, and made up the greater part of the British Olympic team. Champions such as Harold Abrahams, Lord Burghley and Jack Lovelock (New Zealand) were household names, but they supported the Club's regular exhibition matches against schools throughout the country, to encourage the growth of the sport. Popular books passing on their expertise were published, and members contributed at the highest national and international level as coaches, promoters and administrators.

After the Second World War, Achilles athletes remained to the fore. Roger Bannister's achievements captured the imagination of the whole world; Chris Chataway was the darling of the White City; and Chris Brasher struck Olympic gold in Melbourne. By then, however, more clubs were forming as tracks were constructed throughout Britain. Participation in athletics soared, and with it standards of performance, while at the universities academic achievements assumed a greater significance.

Nevertheless the Achilles Club still thrives. In the last 10 years Club teams have competed in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Australia, South Africa, Germany and France; and the continuing series of reciprocal matches against Harvard, Yale and other Ivy League Universities, predating the modern Olympic Games, celebrated its centenary in 1995. Members such as Jon Ridgeon, Craig Masback (USA) and Richard Nerurkar continue to make their mark on the world stage, both as competitors and as administrators.

Membership of the Achilles Club is for life, and the large number of members in attendance today will reaffirm the Club's pride in its enduring commitment and vitality.

Sir Thomas Macpherson  
President

## Being There

Even 50 years on, I'll never forget the gift of being a 21-year old reporter walking across the Iffley Road infield on a cold, windy evening as three friends combined to make an indelible mark in the history of world sport.

Unlike the 1,200 crowd, mainly undergraduates, puzzled into near silence as the senior trio immediately ran away from the three other starters, I had been privy to much of the pre-race planning as a junior writer with *Athletics World*, the ground breaking magazine edited by the twins Norris and Ross McWhirter, friends and athletics advisers to Roger Bannister.

The privilege of watching Roger Bannister doing solitary interval training, after he had paid the user's fee of 3d at the Paddington track and before he hurried back to work at St Mary's Hospital, makes me smile as I think of today's overseas training camps, back-up coaches, sponsored cars, compulsory drugs tests and all the other baggage of the surely sometimes boringly limited life of being a full-time athlete.

Watching Roger Bannister, Christopher Chataway and Christopher Brasher in action was like seeing two sturdy tugs nurse a great white liner into berthing position. Standing inside the track kerb, as the first 220 yards was reached, I was no more than two feet away as Roger, over excited, shouted 'Faster, Chris' to Brasher who wisely ignored him.

Well away from press or public, I was able to trot from one side of the infield to the other, totally absorbed, knowing the record was truly 'on' when Chataway towed Roger to the final back straight. I never cheered or even wept, unlike dear Charles Wenden, later Bursar of All Souls, crouching and clutching his recorder's board as Roger burst past him. But my half-whispered murmur: 'He's done it', was fervent. 'Being there' changed my journalistic career completely. Only seven months later, by then working for *The Times*, I was unexpectedly appointed their athletics correspondent as Roger had declined the position because of his medical commitments. Ah well, his fastest ever for the mile was 'only' 37.8 sec faster than mine as a schoolboy...

✎ Bannister's final season of 1954 included, within only 112 days, victory at Vancouver in the Empire Games mile (3 min 58.8 sec to 3 min 59.6 sec) over Australia's new world record holder (3 min 57.9 sec) John Landy; and then gold over 1,500 metres for the European title in Berne with a final 200 metres covered in 25 seconds.

✎ Before 6 May 1954, Bannister's fastest mile was 4 min 2.0 sec, the fastest since Sweden's Gunder Hägg set the world record of 4 min 1.4sec in 1945. Yet the official British record was 4 min 3.6sec by Roger Bannister at Oxford in May 1953. The discrepancy arose because Bannister's 4min 2.0sec, at Motspur Park, Surrey on 27 June 1953, was so artificially paced, especially by Brasher, that it was never ratified, with the British Athletic Board declaring that it did not consider 'the event was a *bona fide* competition'.

✎ This led to the 1954 Oxford referee Sandy Duncan, later the British Olympic team manager, warning the six

starters in the mile: 'What ever happens, you all must finish.' So after Bannister (3 min 59.4 sec), Chataway (4 min 7.2 sec) and William Hulatt (4 min 17.0sec) had finished, contrary to some contemporary reports, Oxford's pair, Alan Gordon, later a British international, and George Dole, completed the mile, untimed. Behind them came Brasher, the opening pacemaker, who weaved his way through the crowd beginning to throng the track.

✎ It is worth reflecting that Brasher became Olympic 3,000 metres steeplechase champion in 1956, that Bannister had been fourth over 1,500 metres in 1952 and that Chataway, who beat the world 5,000 metres record in October 1954, finished fifth at that distance, after falling, in the Games of 1952. In Melbourne four years later he finished 11th with stomach cramp.

✎ Iffley's cinder track was rolled for the great event under the direction of Derek Johnson, OUAC secretary, who was to win an Olympic silver medal at 800 metres. Asked the difference between cinders and a modern all weather track, Derek estimates: 'Over a mile, maybe 0.5sec a lap faster', thus agreeing exactly with French Olympian Michel Bernard who raced on tracks both ancient and modern.

✎ Spoiled for choice 50 years ago, was a grey haired graduate I met recently. 'I was going to the athletics but at the Parks on the way I became fascinated, watching Yorkshire's Freddie Trueman take three wickets in the first over, including Colin Cowdrey's. Fatally, I stayed on to see Trueman take two more wickets at just about the time (6.00 pm) they started the most famous mile of all.'

✎ Another major athletics record of the evening came in the discus when the AAA's Mark Pharaoh raised the Empire record to 49 metres 68. Two years later, at the Melbourne Olympics, Mark achieved the finest performance in British discus history, finishing fourth in the final as he threw four feet further than he ever did again.

✎ Finally, consider the subsequent careers of our three musketeers. Roger Bannister was an outstanding neurologist, Chairman of the Sports Council, knighted in 1973, and then became Master of Pembroke. Chris Chataway became the first newscaster at Independent TV, a Conservative Government Minister, then Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority and was knighted in 1995. The late, much missed Chris Brasher succeeded as journalist, broadcaster, business executive, founded the London Marathon and, uniquely, was voted both Sportsman of the Year and (twice) Sportswriter of the Year.

Great to have been there, even better to have enjoyed their companionship over the years since.

Neil Allen

Athletics Correspondent for *The Times* (1955–1976); Sports Columnist for the *London Evening Standard* (1976–96); reported 14 Summer and Winter Olympics

### For further information contact:

Iffley Road Sports Complex  
University of Oxford  
Iffley Road  
Oxford OX4 1EQ  
Tel: 01865 240476  
Fax: 01865 240894  
Email: [bannister50th@sport.oxford.ac.uk](mailto:bannister50th@sport.oxford.ac.uk)  
WWW: [sport.ox.ac.uk/bannister50th.shtml](http://sport.ox.ac.uk/bannister50th.shtml)

Produced by the University of Oxford  
Public Relations Office May 2004

Printed by Quadracolor

