



OTHCC

MT26

Newsletter



NEWSLETTER



Michaelmas 2026

In This Edition

1. Welcome
2. Women's Report
3. Men's Report
4. OUCC Summative Report
5. Child Bereavement Parkrun
6. OUCC Hall of Fame: Chris Tavaré
7. A Captain's Reflections
8. Acknowledgements

Welcome

On behalf of everyone at OUCC, welcome to our Michaelmas Term newsletter.

In this edition, we reflect on a historic 2026 season. Following a valuable pre-season tour of India and strong BUCS showings, the summer was headlined by an emphatic Varsity clean sweep over Cambridge across all three formats, alongside an extraordinary, tied Authentics clash at Fenner's.

As winter training begins, please do pass this newsletter on to former teammates and friends, encouraging them to sign up below as we continue to grow our alumni network.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to seeing many of you in 2027.

OUCC Committee 2026-27

Women's Report

Lord's Varsity

Oxford's women were left to rue a difficult batting performance as Cambridge claimed the T20 Varsity at Lord's by four wickets, despite a spirited effort in the field that took the game deep into the chase.



After being asked to bat first, the Blues found scoring difficult from the outset on a pitch that offered assistance to the bowlers. Regular wickets prevented Oxford from building any meaningful partnerships, with Hannah Sutton's 10 the highest score in a total of 51. Jacqui Sanitt (8), Thara Padmanabhan (8) and Charlotte Maple (4) all made starts, while Kiera Nash remained unbeaten at the close of the innings. Despite the modest total, Oxford's batters continued to compete throughout a testing innings.

Knowing they would need early wickets to defend the target, the Blues produced an outstanding start with the ball. Hannah Davis struck twice in her opening spell, while Ella Pal claimed two more wickets to leave Cambridge reeling at 25-5 after eight overs. The pressure was relentless, with disciplined bowling backed up by sharp fielding, including a smart stumping from Shari Hagget and a well-judged catch by Kiera Nash.

Oxford continued to fight throughout the chase, consistently asked questions of the Cambridge batting.

However, with the target so low, Cambridge's lower order were able to rebuild, gradually taking the game away from Oxford before reaching 52-6 in the 15th over.



Although the result was disappointing, the Blues can take considerable pride from the character they showed in the field. Defending just 51, they reduced their opponents to 25-5 and kept the outcome in doubt well beyond the halfway stage of the chase. The determination, energy and discipline displayed throughout the second innings reflected the resilience of the side and ensured the contest remained competitive until the closing stages.



Lord's 2026

Top, L-R: Hannah Sutton, Kiera Nash, Isabelle O'Callaghan, Ella Pal, Thara Padmanabhan, Evie Mayhew, Jacqui Sanitt, Shari Hagget, Sophie Goodman.

Bottom, L-R: Ella Gallagher, Hannah Davis (C), Charlotte Maple

Arundel Varsity

Oxford produced a determined all-round display but ultimately fell just short as Cambridge claimed the One-Day Varsity by seven wickets at Arundel.

After being put in to bat, the Blues made a steady start through Hannah Sutton and Charlotte Maple before Jacqui Sanitt joined Sutton to rebuild the innings. The pair added an important partnership, with Sanitt making a composed 42 and Sutton anchoring the innings superbly for 40 from 92 deliveries. Despite losing wickets at regular intervals, the Blues reached a competitive 184 all out, with the batting effort supplemented by 51 extras.

Defending 185, Oxford made an excellent start with the ball. Hannah Davis continued her outstanding season, producing a superb opening spell that yielded figures of 1-23 from her 10 overs, including two maidens, while keeping the pressure firmly on the Cambridge top order.

Hannah Sutton also struck with the ball, and Kiera Nash claimed a wicket after an unfortunate hit wicket dismissal. Behind the stumps, Sophie Goodman held a sharp catch to reward Sutton's bowling.



*Leavers 2026,
L-R,
Sophie
Goodman,
Hannah Davis,
Ella Gallagher*

Oxford's bowlers maintained impressive discipline throughout much of the innings. Ella Pal and Charlotte Maple kept the scoring in check, while Goodman and Ella Gallagher delivered valuable support spells as the Blues searched for further breakthroughs.

However, with wickets in hand, Cambridge were able to rebuild through a substantial partnership that gradually took the game away from Oxford. Despite the continued efforts of the bowling attack, the target was reached with seven wickets in hand after 34.2 overs.

Although the result did not go Oxford's way, there were plenty of positives to take from the performance. Sutton and Sanitt laid the foundations of a competitive total with mature innings under pressure, while Davis once again led the attack with an outstanding spell that underlined the consistency she showed throughout the season. Oxford's five freshers gained valuable experience and can now lay a strong foundation for years to come. Arundel also provided a poignant opportunity to bid farewell to the team's leavers, Sophie Goodman (2022, Brasenose), Ella Gallagher (2022, Hertford), and Captain Hannah Davis (2022, St. John's). The commitment shown in both batting and bowling ensured the Blues remained competitive throughout the afternoon, providing another example of the resilience and character displayed by the side across the Varsity series.



Season in Review

2026 has been a successful season both on and off the pitch for the Women's Blues. The season began with a student-led joint tour of India with the Men's Blues, helping to foster unity within the club. A group of players visited the Hope Foundation School, where they discussed pathways to higher education and played cricket with students, strengthening the club's outreach programme.

Returning from tour, the Women's Blues enjoyed an outstanding BUCS campaign, going on to win their league unbeaten. Highlights included a convincing victory over Cambridge at the Fenner's. After a narrow loss in the playoff, the Women's Blues will look to retain their league title and push for promotion again next season.



A further highlight was an outstanding win against MCC. After a strong batting performance from the visitors, Oxford was set 244 from 50 overs.

A mixed initial effort left Oxford at 210-9, but a fantastic partnership between Hannah Davis, who top-scored with 53*, and Isabelle O'Callaghan steadily chipped away at and finally achieved the total.

The growth of the Women's 2nd XI, captained this season excellently by Ananya Apte, is a source of great pride, particularly bolstered by their convincing Varsity win. The Club eagerly anticipates their further development and success.



Looking ahead to 2027, we are excited to be holding the University Matches Dinner at Lord's, in recognition of the 200th anniversary of the first men's Varsity fixture. This will provide an excellent opportunity to connect with alumni and to celebrate the history of the club. We will look to field competitive teams for all sides in next year's Varsity matches in what looks to be an exciting 200th anniversary year for OUCC.

Men's Report

Following a successful pre-season tour of India and a strong start at home, the Men's Blues enjoyed an encouraging BUCS campaign, improving upon last year's return with two standout victories against Durham UCCE and Cambridge. The bowling effort was spearheaded by opening pair Nat Taylor (7 wickets at 15.00) and Chris Carnegie (7 wickets at 34.00), backed up by Vivek Narayan's consistent support (5 wickets at 23.00). With the bat, Narayan led the aggregates with 347 runs at an average of 69.00, while Toby Brown produced a phenomenal campaign, compiling 246 runs at an average of 82.00.

The season, however, was headlined by a historic clean sweep over Cambridge across all formats. In the T20 Varsity at Lord's, the Blues defended 137 to become the first side to successfully defend a total at HQ since the fixture moved there. Jai Chandra (24) and George Roberts (29) established a solid platform before Vivek Narayan (23*) and an explosive cameo from Robbie Hardwick (19 off 9 balls) lifted Oxford to a competitive score.

Penetrative opening spells from Carnegie and Taylor, capped by a clutch captain's spell of 3-21 from Saqlain Chaudhary, sealed a famous triumph in London.

The sides met again a few weeks later in a 50-over BUCS fixture with Cambridge desperate to kickstart their campaign and preserve their Premier Division status. Incoming captain Vivek Narayan promptly took the game away from the visitors, shattering the Men's BUCS club record with a majestic 149 off 159 balls. Nat Taylor then applied the squeeze with a suffocating spell of off-spin, claiming five Cambridge wickets to seal a resounding 178-run rout.

Men's Arundel

A glorious late-June morning at the picturesque Arundel Castle set the stage for the 50-over Varsity encounter. Having won the toss, Oxford elected to bat on a surface that, while ostensibly true, offered enough assistance to keep both batting line-ups honest. A tentative start saw George Roberts top-edge an early pull, but Vivek Narayan and Henry Nicholls steadied the ship with a fluent 52-run stand before Narayan holed out to mid-on.

Amogh Karpe joined Nicholls, adding 49 until Nicholls was dismissed for a composed 43. When leading run-scorer Toby Brown fell for a duck soon after, Oxford found themselves under pressure at 108-4 after 26 overs. Jai Chandra and Karpe set about rebuilding with real intent, treating the Arundel crowd to an exhibition of stroke-making—Karpe repeatedly finding the rope while Chandra punished anything short before falling for 21. Karpe anchored the middle overs with authority, eventually falling for a stellar 87 after a mistimed pull

Late-innings impetus from George Gardiner and Nat Taylor—blending inventive strokes with sharp running—pushed the total to 235 on an increasingly sluggish pitch. With the ball, Chris Carnegie struck early with a beauty that nipped back through the gate to bowl the Cambridge captain, before finding Ed Cake's outside edge with one that slid across the right-hander. Nat Taylor bowled unbroken through his 10 overs from the other end, removing the dangerous Ferreira, before Narayan trapped Ramisetty in front for a duck. A ruthless spell of off-spin from Chaudhary wrapped up the tail, completing an emphatic 105-run victory.

Men's 4 Day Match

Cambridge won the toss and elected to bat first under the sun in the multi-day Varsity, hoping to get ahead of the game before an expected deterioration in the Parks pitch, which had regularly proven difficult to accumulate runs on throughout the season, owing to its slow, low and dry nature.

The visitors began solidly with a 40-run opening stand before Chris Carnegie removed Ferreira. Debutant Will Marriage then produced the moment of the morning, sending off-stump cartwheeling out of the ground. Saqlain Chaudhary and Nat Taylor capitalised, maintaining relentless pressure to leave Cambridge reeling at four down by lunch. A brilliant direct-hit run-out and a sharp midwicket catch from Carnegie accounted for Happe and Serby, before Chaudhary (4 wickets) and Taylor (3 wickets) ran through the middle and lower order. A stubborn tenth-wicket stand dragged Cambridge to 180, leaving Oxford with a testing hour to negotiate on Day 1.

The reply began turbulently: George Roberts was undone by a grubber, and Henry Nicholls was pinned in front by a sliding delivery from the left arm off-break of Hughes-Pinan, who would prove to be a thorn in Oxford's side for the remainder of the game. Vivek Narayan and Amogh Karpe safely guided the Blues to the close of play two down for 64 runs.

Day 2 began poorly when Karpe fell in the first over to another delivery that gripped from Hughes-Pinan. Toby Brown joined Narayan to add 54 resilient runs before Narayan was pinned on the back foot. A mini-collapse ensued: Chandra fell cutting at a turning delivery, and a disastrous mix-up saw Brown run out. Vital lower-order contributions from George Gardiner (20) and Chris Carnegie (29) squeezed out a slender 20-run first-innings lead

Carnegie struck early once again in Cambridge's second innings to remove Ferreira, before Chaudhary and Taylor reduced the visitors to 73-5—a lead of just 53. However, an aggressive 43 from Happe, backed by stoic resistance from Serby, dragged Cambridge to 127 ahead by the close of play.

Both sides were well aware that Day 3 would likely determine the winner of the fixture, and so Chris Carnegie's dismissal of Serby early in the morning proved a turning point in allowing Oxford to re-gain momentum and the initiative in the match.

Despite Happe continuing his assault on the Oxford bowlers with an array of sweeps, captain Chaudhary regularly claimed wickets from the other end and eventually had Happe caught at deep backward square leg. Chaudhary mopped up the tail and finished with match figures of 11-121, setting Oxford 196 to win.

The chase began briskly as left-handers Nicholls and Roberts neutralised the spin attack, adding 63 for the first wicket. Nicholls eventually fell to spin, followed by Narayan holing out to mid-on and Karpe chopping on. Playing his final match as a Blue, Roberts combined with Brown to chip away at the target with immense composure—even after Oxford were hit with a 10-run penalty for poor behaviour.

Shortly after reaching his half-century, George Roberts was dismissed, bringing in Nat Taylor to the crease. Taylor's steady left-handed presence alongside the veteran Brown helped counter the left-arm spin, as he and Brown added 86 off 228 balls to guide Oxford to the brink of victory. Brown closed out the chase with a series of memorable cover drives, seeing Oxford home alongside Jai Chandra to seal an unforgettable Varsity clean sweep.

Authentics 3 Day Match

Cambridge Crusaders 1st Innings: 315-9 dec (85 overs)

Oxford Authentics 1st Innings: 278-7 dec (70.2 overs)

Cambridge Crusaders 2nd Innings: 247 all out (64.2 overs)

Oxford Authentics 2nd Innings: 284 all out (64 overs)

Result: Match Tied

The Crusaders elected to bat first at Fenner's, with disciplined opening spells from Ben Taplin (1-36) and Darsh (0-25) keeping the scoring in check. The hosts reached 140-1 before a three-wicket burst from Timon and Tilak hauled the Authentics back into contention.

Ollie Dunnett removed Mahesh for 48, but a rapid cameo from No. 11 Reading (including 20 off a single over) lifted Cambridge to a declaration at 315–9. Dunnett and Kushal Sainani saw out the final overs to close Day 1 on 7–0.

On Day 2, Dunnett and Sainani extended their opening stand to 50. A composed century partnership between Conor Grant and Timon Basu carried Oxford past 100 before lunch, with handy lower-order hitting from Robbie Hardwick and Nathan Schofield. Basu marched on to a superb hundred before falling, allowing Oxford to declare at 278–7 to set up an evening tilt with the ball. Darshey Pandey struck twice in two balls to reduce the Crusaders to 21–2, with further inroads from seam bowling being made by T Hilditch. By end of play on Day 2, Cambridge closed on 121–2, with a tantalising Day 3 in prospect.

Day 3 began with the Authentics' spin attack making early inroads: O Dunnett took five wickets, supported by tight bowling from T Wood, as the Crusaders' second innings closed on 247 all out, setting Oxford a target of 285 to win from 64 overs.

K Sainani fell early in the chase, but O Dunnett and C Grant added a half-century stand before O Dunnett departed for 48. A middle-order collapse followed, with T Basu, R Hardwick, G Schofield, and T Wood all dismissed as the required total narrowed. D Pandey and captain B Taplin then combined to bring the target down to single figures before both were dismissed in quick succession, leaving the scores level with one wicket in hand. T Patel's contribution tied the scores, and the match was ultimately decided on the final ball of the 64th over, when T Hilditch was dismissed attempting the winning run, ending an extraordinary contest as a tie.

Captain B. Taplin produced an informal and unedited Match Report over the three days, extensively detailing the extraordinary events both on and off the field throughout the week amidst contentious declaration decisions and the tense hours in the dying sun at F P Fenner's, all of which can be found below - an absolute must-read (c. 20 mins) ; the summary alone does not do it justice!

READ THE FULL MATCH REPORT [HERE](#) - WARNING OF SOME 'FLOWERY' LANGUAGE

OUCC Summative Report

The 2026 season was another successful year for OUCC. The Men's and Women's Blues began the year with a joint tour of India, providing an excellent opportunity to build camaraderie while competing against strong local opposition. The Men's Blues won five of six matches, with Nicholls leading the batting and T Patel impressing with the ball. For the Women, individual milestones and consistency were equally encouraging, with Maisie Wright recording her first tour fifty and Sophie Goodman bowling economically throughout the trip.

Back in Oxford, the Women's Blues enjoyed an outstanding BUCS campaign, winning their league unbeaten. Highlights included an impressive victory over Cambridge at Fenner's before a narrow defeat in the promotion play-off. Hannah Davis was the standout performer with the ball, taking 41 wickets across the year—the highest wicket tally ever recorded in the club's history.

In the Varsity fixtures, the Women's Blues showed tremendous resilience despite defeats in both limited-overs matches. At Lord's, Oxford recovered admirably from being dismissed for 51, with Davis and Pal helping reduce Cambridge to 25-5 before the Tabs ultimately completed the chase. While at Arundel composed innings from Sutton (40) and Sanitt (42), together with another outstanding spell from Davis, ensured Oxford remained competitive throughout.



The Men's Blues also improved on the previous year's BUCS campaign, recording victories over Durham UCCE and Cambridge before carrying that form into the Varsity fixtures. Oxford completed the quadruple over Cambridge, beginning with a memorable T20 victory at Lord's before following up with wins in the BUCS fixture, the 50-over Varsity at Arundel and the four-day Varsity at the Parks. Saqlain Chaudhary's match figures of 11-121 in the four-day match were among the standout performances of the season.

Across the wider club, the Authentics enjoyed one of the most dramatic Varsity matches in recent years. After Basu's first-innings century and Dunnett's five-wicket haul helped set up a chase of 285, the match swung repeatedly on the final day before the final wicket fell attempting the winning run with the scores level, resulting in an extraordinary tied match.



The season demonstrated the strength and depth of cricket throughout OUCC. Strong performances from established and emerging talent provide an excellent platform for 2027, when the club will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the first Varsity match and the return of the University Matches Dinner at Lord's, providing an opportunity to celebrate OUCC's history and strengthen connections with alumni.

Child Bereavement Parkrun

On a rainy Saturday morning in June, a group of bleary-eyed OUCC cricketers gathered outside the Pavillion to run 5K, dressed in full kit, in aid of Child Bereavement UK.

The runners had not anticipated the difficulty of running in cricket pads, which resulted in an extra leg workout, a few walking breaks, and a wide variety of finishing times! Supporters and other encouraging runners buoyed the team, who then enjoyed brunch at Somerville College; a convivial way to solidify inter-club spirit.



OUCC's efforts resulted in £855 being raised for Child Bereavement.

We are very proud to have Child Bereavement UK as one of our partners, who do such important work for bereaved families.

OUCC Hall of Fame:

Chris Tavaré

Chris Tavaré came up to St. John's from Sevenoaks School in 1974 to read Zoology and played in three Varsity matches in 1975, 1976 and 1977. Two draws book-ended an excellent Oxford win in 1976 by 10 wickets. Captained that year by Vic Marks, who himself went on to a successful England career and then in cricket journalism and radio, Oxford had arguably the last university team able to hold its own against counties. Chris Tavaré was the rock around which Oxford's batting was built, scoring 775 runs in 10 first-class matches, including 99 in that Lord's victory. He played for Kent while at Oxford and was part of the Championship-winning Kent side in 1977 and 1978. He later went on to captain Kent before moving to Somerset as captain in 1989.

He made his international debut in 1980 in a one-day international against the strong West Indies team, made 82 not out and won the man-of-the-match award. His Test debut followed that same year and he went on to play in 31 Tests between 1980 and 1989.



A free-scoring batsman at Oxford and in his early career, he came into an England team where survival was the name of the game and he became renowned as the batsman either opening or at number three who could frustrate the strong bowling attacks which West Indies and Australia could field in that decade. In the fifth Test against Australia in 1981, he scored 69 and 78 and was at the crease for twelve hours, his second innings a seven-hour marathon, but England won the game and retained the Ashes. He then played 26 consecutive Tests, scoring two centuries. His fifty in five hours, fifty minutes against Pakistan in 1982 was the second slowest England fifty on record. In all he made two hundreds and twelve fifties in his 31 Tests, averaging 32.

His Test career seemed to have ended in 1984, but he was recalled for a single Test against Australia in 1989. He retired in 1993 from first-class cricket and returned to Sevenoaks School to teach biology.

Chris Tavaré became something of a cult cricketer in the 1980s. Matthew Engel wrote about him: 'Everything about Chris Tavaré annoyed the Australians in the early 1980s, right down to his acute accent: he was the antithesis of their idea of a cricketer. An Oxford graduate, rather silent, effete-seeming, he simply refused to get out of their way and batted for hours, even days. The energy other players put into their strokes Tavaré expended by walking halfway to square-leg after every delivery. He could play shots and was particularly effective at smashing off-spinners over the top. But he didn't like to let on.'



Another writer, the Australian Gideon Haigh, admitted to making him one of his favourite cricketers; 'Watching on television in Australia in 1982, I was simultaneously aching for his next run and spellbound by Tavaré's trance-like absorption in his task. First came his pad, gingerly, hesitantly; then came the bat, laid alongside it almost as furtively; with the completion of each prod would commence a circular perambulation to leg to marshal his thoughts and his strength for the next challenge'.

Chris Tavaré, along with Vic Marks (who played six Tests), are the last two Oxford Blues to play Test Cricket for England, a statistic which is likely to endure forever.

David Walsh

Reflections from Saqlain Chaudhary

As we bid farewell to several players this year, we invited outgoing captain Saqlain Chaudhary to contribute to the newsletter, reflecting on his seasons and time at OUCC.

Captain's Review — Saqlain Chaudhary

2026 has been a season of firsts for our club. We began the year with a number of ambitions, the first of which was to lead the first joint men's and women's tour in the club's history. This presented a particular challenge, with the touring party doubling in size and therefore cost, whilst navigating the post-Frewen era without our traditional tour funding. Thanks largely to the efforts of Hannah Davis and Vivek Narayan, however, 28 OUCC members completed a hugely successful ten-day tour of India. The combination of cultural exposure and high-quality preparation on the field made it a memorable experience for everyone involved.

That preparation translated into an excellent start to the season, with the Blues defeating Durham UCCE at the Parks. In only our second season in the BUCS Premier League, the result demonstrated our growing ability to compete with the aspiring professionals of the UCCE programmes. Ben Taplin was particularly impressive on his BUCS Blues debut, with his seam bowling and the keeper standing up to the stumps, a tactic which appears since to have made its way up the game to the England side. Our opening attack of Chris Carnegie and Nat Taylor consistently set the tone throughout the campaign, backed by the commitment of the entire squad to the winter programme and the invaluable support of the Blues Performance Programme. More so than any previous season, strong contributions came from across the squad, leaving plenty of optimism for future seasons.

The final, and perhaps most satisfying, first came against Cambridge. The 2026 Blues became the first side in the club's history to defeat Cambridge four times in a single year. A 13-run victory at Lord's was followed by a dominant BUCS win, led by Vivek Narayan's record 149 and Nathaniel Taylor's maiden five-wicket haul. At Arundel, Amogh Karpe's brilliant 87 on a difficult used wicket set up a 105-run victory.

That left the Big Match at the Parks, with the opportunity to make history. On a very dry wicket, the game was fiercely contested, with the spinners from both sides taking full advantage. I was fortunate to contribute eleven wickets across the match, but ultimately it was a victory built on contributions throughout the side, with each man standing up when required. The winning runs fittingly came from the bat of veteran Toby Brown, who scored an unbeaten 73 to complete our fourth victory over Cambridge.

As I conclude my time here as a player and captain, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has supported the club and me over the past five years. They have been five of the most enjoyable and edifying years of my life, and it has been an enormous privilege to represent and captain OUCC.

A season of firsts, a season of lasts, and a fitting way to say goodbye.

Acknowledgements

Thank you for getting to the end of our newsletter. As the OUCC committee, we would also like to thank you for your continued interest in and care for the club.

We welcome and appreciate the support of our alumni during the playing season and throughout the term.

Next term's edition will feature introductions from the new captains.

Co-editors: Isabelle O'Callaghan (2025, Somerville) and Benjamin Taplin (2024, Hertford)

Women's Blues against Loughborough