



**Name:** Emma Coleman-Jones (née Coleman)

**Subject:** DPhil in Biological Sciences

**College:** Magdalen

**Years of Study:** 1993-1996



### Early Years

*'Like most children in the 1970s I guess I ran about a lot. When I was about seven I remember my dad giving me 50p to run non-stop around the ramparts of a large iron age hill fort (Maiden Castle, Dorset) no doubt whilst dressed in flowery flares and sandals... Then of course, there was running at primary school, where athletics was the main summer sport'.*

*I ran at secondary school and competed in cross-country and track, including county and English Schools on two occasions. But for me it was mainly about racing I didn't train so much and although I had local clubs on my doorstep (Reading AC) I didn't join in very often'.*



*Emma, 1979, running at District Sports Twyford*

Emma recalls herself being a shy child, who didn't listen much to those who told her she could be a good runner if she trained.

*'School didn't have a huge focus on cross-country- usually just a bleak playing field with a tiny area of trees where some pupils hid to avoid running the full distance!'*

That said, Emma recalls participating more in athletics races whilst at school. ‘*Amazingly, I met an old school friend the other day, who showed me a document claiming we still held the school record from 1985, for the 4x100m relay!*’

### Oxford Days

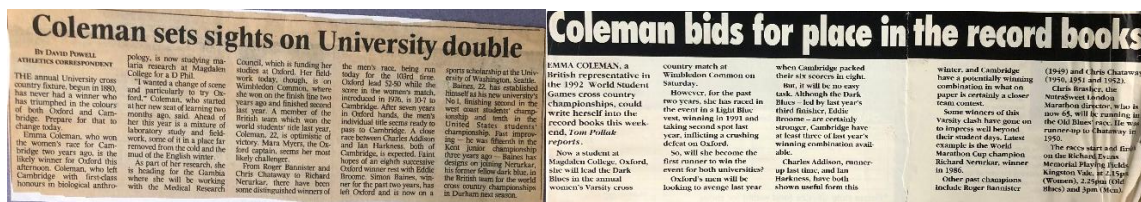
‘*Having had an amazing four years with the Cambridge Hares and Hounds, OUCCC/AC were of course my first port of call in terms of clubs and activities in Oxford. Quite a few friends from Cambridge had also moved to Oxford for further degrees (MPhils, DPhils, Clinical Medicine) and I knew a few of the Oxford runners too (although by the time I got there some had already graduated)*’.

As a DPhil student with lots of lab work on her hands as well as overseas work in West Africa, Emma found she was less able to attend the regular club sessions. ‘*There were also always injuries lurking in the background*’. That said, she enjoyed the transition to Oxford noting that ‘*Training wise, it was pretty similar, although in comparison to Cambridge, Oxford does have a few small hills and probably more interesting local terrain. In Cambridge we used to drive the minibus 30 minutes away to find a hill to run on... and even that was on a horse racing circuit!*’

‘*I remember with fondness the 3- minute runs in the University Parks, which was a weekly session. I often reflect on these now as I continue to run in the Parks, occasionally to do actual sessions and parkrun there... but more to draw trees). We also did hill sprints in South Parks, and track sessions which culminated in tea at the track. In my memory these were weekly events, and the tea always included marmalade sandwiches, custard creams, pink wafers, orange squash and other things of that nature!*’

Amongst the sessions, Emma recollects the long runs from the Rad Cam and running down along the river to Radley (something that many OUCCC members today will find familiar during their summer use of Radley College track, whilst Iffley’s track was being resurfaced).

As Emma made her transition to Oxford, the news spread and everyone’s eyes turned to Varsity to see if Emma could make history with a double gold, once for Cambridge and once for Oxford.



Newspaper cuttings in the run up to the 1993 Blues Varsity Match.

### Varsity

‘*Ah, it has been fun looking back at my scrapbooks and reliving the huge excitement that the Varsity Match brought- the whole term of build-up and then the race itself. It is ironic, I think, that in the photos it looks really quite bleak, cold, dark and muddy with so few runners (only 6 per team for the women’s race back then), but in experience and memory it is such a huge event.*

*If I had to pick my favourite, it would be the first time I ran it, and won, in 1991. It was my favourite race, I guess, because it was unexpected- unexpected things are almost always the best. I don’t remember being a favourite for winning it at all, probably because I hadn’t even run in the team in the two preceding years- as so it was fun to overtake the Oxford runners towards the end and stride on the long downhill towards the finish. My dad, who had been a keen sportsman and was standing at the finish, was very proud of me. Winning the Varsity and reading reports in Athletics Weekly afterwards gave me a huge confidence boost and suddenly, without having ever even thought of higher things, I*

was 5<sup>th</sup> in BUSF shortly afterwards. I then made the GB team for the World Student Games cross country that spring (1992)'.



Left: Emma with her mum, Post-race. Right: Emma Celebrating her win.


Telephone Message

Time Received 9-45 AM Date 9-3-92

From S. SPRINGMAN

Message F. COLEMAN  
BRILLIANT MEN'S

RING ME AT HOME  
TO MORNOW 8-8-30 AM

Received by 

"JUSTSO" FORM No. 110.  
A "GUILDHALL" PRODUCT

A congratulatory hand-written note from Sarah Springman (now Dame Professor Sarah Springman, Principal of St Hilda's College, Oxford), congratulating Emma on making the British Students team. The old-school type messaging system, delivered to the Newnham College Porter's Lodge.



World Student Games in Dijon, 1992, where the GB women achieved a team gold! Emma recollects the amusing set of drinks on offer at the finish line- white wine, red wine or champagne!

Emma, with 3 degrees between her time at Cambridge and then at Oxford, was able to experience the Varsity Matches time and time again.

*'In 1992, still at Cambridge but a graduate now doing a PGCE, I came second to Channah Fothergill. Channah really deserved that win- she was such a great runner and a great team player and friend. We used to train together a lot and probably looked quite comical- she so petite and me so long-legged'.*

*'1993 was the year I won the race for Oxford, having just started my DPhil there that term. This was a lot of fun and to be fair, it got way more attention than it probably demanded but it was fun to have it none the less! It is funny looking back at the newspaper clippings which my dad used to send me: I don't think that this kind of thing would get so much coverage in 'The Times' as it did back then! I have a lot of great photos from this race as the Times dispatched a photographer to the event. I'm not sure what he made of it (... a muddy field in December with a few skinny runners..) but I remember the photos were all taken afterwards and I had to run about a lot having just finished the race. Luckily there was a bit of sun to liven things up that year'.*



1993 Blues Varsity- Emma and the team: Mara, Sarah, Julie and Ainsley



Newspaper cuttings from Emma's historic double win.

## Friendships and Memories

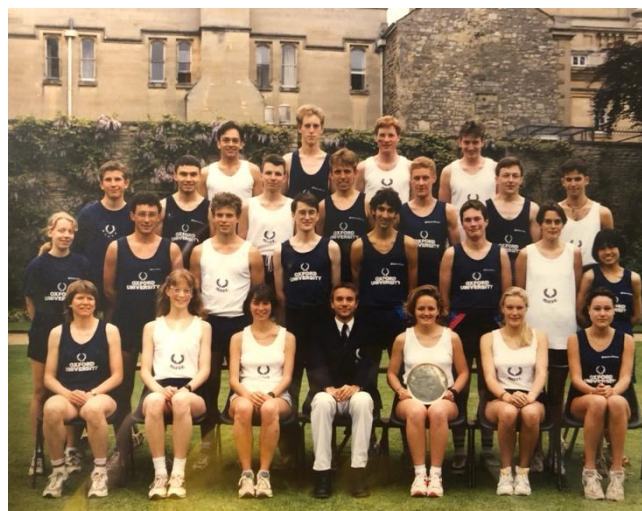
With many years of Cross Country Running during her time at University, Emma tells us about her longstanding friendships.

*'My greatest running friend at Oxford was Mara Yamauchi (née Myers) who I ran with a lot and did a lot of non-running activities with too. Mara was a bridesmaid at my wedding and has always been around to share the ups and downs of life over the past 30 years or so. She is the person with whom I have kept up most consistently, and we see each other very regularly, often for runs or walks.'*

Mara, of course, also has a host of great athletic accolades to her name, having raced at two Olympic Games, placing 6<sup>th</sup> in the Marathon at the 2008 Beijing Olympics. With a PB of 2:23:12, she placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the 2009 London Marathon. *'As a coach, author, commentator and advocate for women's sport, Mara continues to be very much involved in all aspects of distance running'.*



*Emma and Mara after the 1993 Blues Varsity Match*



*OUCCC Teams of 1993-1994. Captains Mara Yamauchi (née Myers) and Eddie Broome*

“Matt Bateson was also one of my great friends at the time, although sadly we are out of touch now- last seen at varsity reunion some time ago. Simon Baines had graduated by the time I arrived in Oxford but was living and training here so we used to meet up. And, of course, Simon Hall, one of my best friends from Cambridge. He was mainly a track runner – with reluctant forays into cross country -so whilst we didn't train together so much, it was great to have him around. It has been fun to catch up with him again these past years as his son has been studying at Lady Margaret Hall. Not forgetting Hsu Min Chung, of course, always such good fun at OUCCC parties (and races!) and another friend I still see quite often in Oxford.”



1991 Athletics Weekly Reports on Emma Coleman and Simon Baines, both born on Marth 4<sup>th</sup> 1971, who won the Women's and Men's Blues races, respectively, that year.

Racing Memories

“One embarrassing occasion sticks in my mind: it was quite a big race that we had gone to and the Oxford Women's team were standing around chatting, still wearing tracksuits, before the race. We heard over the loudspeaker “And that's the women's race, just underway...”. We then, of course, had to start a cross-country race with an extremely fast sprint just to catch up with the runners at the back of the field! Since then, I have always been a bit anxious about paying attention pre-race!.”

Post-University

Emma reflects on the role that running has played during her life.

“Mainly due to the brilliant times I had at CUHH and OUCCC, running has been a really big part of my life from student days to the present. I have had my fair share of injuries but I am lucky to have been able to carry on running ... and to share my enthusiasm for it with others– in schools, in the community and in my own household!”

Emma left Oxford with three degrees under her belt: Archaeology and Anthropology (Newnham, Cambridge), PGCE in Biology (Newnham, Cambridge), DPhil in Biological Sciences, specifically human genetics in relation to Malaria susceptibility (Magdalen, Oxford).

Initially, Emma opted for a research fellowship at Oriel but stepped down after deciding to pursue a career in teaching. *“I loved my subject but enjoyed talking about it more than doing the original research, so I thoroughly enjoyed my work in independent and state schools for many years, alongside some teaching back at Oxford University in Human Sciences and Anthropology. I also had a wonderful few years not working when my children were young.”*

*“After this, in 2014, I returned to teaching part time and since then I have been developing my second career as an artist. Along the way I went back to being a student, taking a diploma in Art and Design alongside various other types of training with professional artists. Now I work as a professional artist myself, specialising in drawing trees. I end up drawing a lot of Oxford’s wonderful trees and views for various projects and commissions as well as doing work based on maps and text. I run workshops, museum sessions and community collaborations as well. So, basically, I get to link all my interests together in exploring the history, ecology and cultural aspects associated with trees. I very rarely leave home without my sketchbook and sometimes even combine running and sketching by taking a small rucksack of materials and stopping, mid run, if there is something of interest to draw!”*

This month we are excited to share Emma’s Artwork with OUCCC! In consultation with the 1876 committee, Emma has created a unique anniversary artwork to celebrate our 50 year history of women’s participation at the Varsity Matches.

The work combines her hand drawn course map with the names and positions of every runner in the Blues event since 1975, and is accompanied by a brief history of the race. It will be printed on high quality paper and mounted and backed in a 12 x12 inch ivory mount. Drafts will be available to view online and in person at the evening event on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December, although, of course, the final 16 names and the 2025 result needed to complete the work can only be added *after* this year’s Blues match on 6<sup>th</sup> December! See link which takes you to a new page on Emma’s website. Here you will find information about ordering your copy of the commemorative piece.