Sporting memories

Our alumni share their sporting memories. To add yours, please email **alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk (mailto:alumnicommunications@contacts.bham.ac.uk)**

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1950s

Open all sections

Paul Gentles (BA Combined Arts [Russian], 1956)

I was a member of the University Boxing Club, which had a gym at the top of the old Edmund Street Arts Faculty building in the city centre. I boxed for the University between 1952 and 1956. We were coached by an ex-England Pro: Martin Curley. Members of the Club included; Mike Supple. Mick Gallagher, Paul Gentles, Mike Pearson, Fred Mellor, Bryn Jones, Keith Dixon, Bryn Jones and Peter Pearson (Captain). It was a successful club and had matches against a range of other universities. In my time there were two full blues: Peter Pearson and myself. Paul Gentles was made a full blue as a result of winning three fights in one afternoon in Reading to win the Universities Athletic Union Light Welterweight Championship in 1956.

David Lane (BSc Electrical Engineering, 1959)

I have memories of Professors Tucker and Allanson developing SONAR. Having a final-year project working with Solly Zuckerman in the Queen Elizabeth, improving the analytical ability of his new encephalograph recorder, experiences later published as Graduate Premium Paper within the Institute of Electrical Engineers. Student years were enhanced by membership of Guild Council, representing the Department.

Tennis and Athletics were high on the agenda. Lunch hours were often spent setting a 440-yard lap pace for Mike Rawson (running 880 yards); he was representing GB at the time.

1960s

David Lim (BSoc Economics, Politics and Sociology, 1966)

My fond memories include: Being a member (long jumper) and secretary of the Birmingham Athletics Club, whose unpaid and unofficial coach was Dr Mike Hayes from the Department of Chemistry; training on the athletics track behind/beside the library at lunchtime; touring tertiary institutions in the then West Germany (Cologne, Hanover and Berlin) and representing the UAU in long jump.

Attending lectures on Political Science by the then Dean, Professor Harry Ferns (questions such as: 'What would your chair look like if your knees were bent the other way?' and using the film *Shane* as the theme for a lecture on good and evil).

I retired from Griffith University, where I was Professor of Economics, Dean and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Quality Advancement) in July 2010 and was made a Professor Emeritus. I am now the Founding President/Vice-Chancellor of the Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, which offers vocationally-oriented degree programmes, and is a member institution of the Vocational Training Council of Hong Kong.

1970s

David Taylor (BSc Chemical Engineering, 1972)

I am still working as I race through my 60s. I love my job – a Chartered Accountant with Andersens and Deloitte, then 30 years in commerce/industry as a Tax Manager focusing on international tax. For 13 years, I have been the Tax Manager of oil and gas engineering contractors which employ lots and lots of chemical engineers. So a full-ish circle.

My memories:

In 1969 being in the Brum hockey first XI, and we had eight or nine full-backs in the team so stuck two+ ex-schoolboy internationals in the forward line. We let in very few goals, but didn't score too many either.

The hockey XI went on a three-game tour to a Netherlands hockey tournament and our loud, in-tune, much-repeated, drink-encouraged song was 'We beat Amersfort City, we beat Hanover too, we'll beat Schaervade tomorrow, cos Birmingham... we love you' to the tune of *Land of Hope and Glory*. Sadly, we lost 2-1 to the hosts, Schaervade, but the song didn't bother about such trivia.

On the way back from the Netherlands we used a hovercraft – force four wind on leaving and force seven or so on arriving in UK. All our team were sick on the hovercraft, except tough-stomached me who suggested a fry-up on our arrival at Folkestone (as I recall). That re-polished off a few.

1980s

Ron Macey (BPhilEd, 1980)

I ran for the University in cross country races in the area. Whilst in Birmingham I had lodgings in Moseley with a very kind elderly lady. She used to provide me with an enormous breakfast - which she insisted I ate every morning, including Saturdays - race days!

At the British Universities Cross Country Championships at Stirling University that year, we stayed there the night before which meant I didn't have to eat my landlady's cooked breakfast! In the event I finished 11th, which I felt was quite a good effort for an 'old codger' of 44. When the awards were given out and as my name was called, a member of our team called out: 'This is Ron, who's old enough to be the father of everyone in the race!' Another lad in our team replied: 'He probably was!'

William Sandham (PhD, 1981)

I have some very happy sporting memories during my time at Birmingham with the boxing club. When I was at Glasgow University (1970-74) I represented the University in the Scottish Universities Championships and won the Scottish title twice (1972 and 1974) at lightweight, also beating the current British Universities Champion (from Aberdeen).

When I did postgraduate studies at Birmingham, I took up the sport again, and was captain of the boxing club when we won the British Universities title in 1977 and 1979. I was awarded a full blue for boxing in 1980. I think one of the reasons for our success was that we trained and boxed outside the University at the Austin Amateur Boxing Club at Longbridge. Yes, certainly lots of very happy memories!

2000s

Jack Boteler (BA Theology, 2009)

I have fond and recent memories of Birmingham having only graduated in 2009 although it is a bit alarming to think that hardly any of the undergraduates at Birmingham were there when I was!

Some of my best Birmingham memories are from being in the fencing team. We did very well in my first year, with both the men's and women's teams winning the Northern Premier League and coming third in the BUSA (as it was then) Team Championships. Our team members also won a number of medals at the BUSA/BUCS Individual Championships during my three years at Brum.

In my second year I was Men's Captain and in my third year Club Vice Captain, two great experiences that I really benefited from. In my third year our women's team again came third in the BUCS Team Championships. I also ran unsuccessfully for VP Sport in my third year which was another really fun and beneficial experience. The atmosphere and camaraderie that we had in the club and amongst the teams was always really good (one of the reasons why I have such fond memories of fencing at Brum) and I am really pleased to see from afar that the club still seems to be doing well.

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