

Extract from Sir Hugh Boustead's autobiography 'The Wind of Morning', Chatto & Windus 1971.

I decided at this time to stay in the army, and I was recommended for a regular commission. This would take some time to come through, and in the meantime, as Captain in the South African Scottish, I was rather at a loose end. My old friend Hugh Seymour had been at Oxford for a year before the war, and was about to go up again to complete his degree course before joining the Indian Civil Service. He had no difficulty in persuading me to come and see the Provost of Worcester, his College. My interview went off alright, and although I had been brought up in anything but an academic atmosphere, and it seemed curious to meet an elderly gentleman with no contacts whatsoever with the world as I knew it. I had to sit an exam of sorts, and then was accepted as an undergraduate. I decided to read Russian, since my colloquial knowledge had been good enough to take me all around the Don; but there was no strenuous striving in post-war Oxford. Life in college was comfortable, and friendships were easily formed.

My life for a year alternated between Oxford and boxing ... [*He then describes his involvement in Amateur Boxing*]...

This encouraged me to enter the Army Championships at Aldershot, where I won the Lightweight after knocking my opponent through the ropes. After the fight, when I was sitting in the dressing-room getting my breath back, the Director of Physical Training ... asked me where I was going ... He told me that I was remarkably fit, and that I ought to put my name down for the Modern Pentathlon trials at Aldershot in June. I had never heard of this performance, but when he explained that it consisted of riding, running, shooting, fencing and swimming, and that the Olympic Games in Antwerp was the objective, I was full of enthusiasm.

A splendid term ended with a memorable evening at the Commem at Trinity, which Hugh Seymour and I had promised to attend in a party with some enchanting young Danish girls ... We danced until the sun was up, had bacon and eggs for breakfast and then went down to the Cherwell for a bathe.

A few days later I went to Aldershot for the Pentathlon trials. All my life I had taken an active part in the sports concerned, without being eminent in any one of them. I was selected,

and within 3 weeks was asked to captain the team. We practised hard, ending up with a few days at Aldeburgh where we attracted some attention fencing with the epee on the front, the only suitable place I could find. In August we travelled to Antwerp for the Games, but were beaten in all the Pentathlon events by the Swedes, who had been training for it since the previous Olympics in 1912 ...