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## AGM Thursday 17 March at 7 pm

*Magdalen College Auditorium  
Longwall Street*

A reminder that all are welcome at the AGM. The papers are on pages 6—12.

### Please bring these papers with you.

The event will include a talk by Jeremy Mogford, proprietor of the Old Bank and Old Parsonage Hotels, on running businesses in listed buildings.

## The Localism Bill - threat or opportunity?

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

In December the Localism Bill was presented to Parliament and may become law by autumn this year. The principles of the bill are that power is to be devolved from central Government to a more local level. This is seen as being more democratic, as well as removing layers of bureaucracy and their associated cost.

The bill, which forms the basis of the Government's 'Big Society' agenda, runs to over 400 pages and at the moment there is wide variation in its interpretation and prediction of its likely effects. At the level of local communities, there are to be rights to:

- veto excessive Council Tax rises
- bid to take over the running of certain services
- purchase public assets put up for sale
- hold referendums on local issues, and
- carry out development without the need for planning consent, subject to certain conditions.

Local authorities will have powers to perform any activities they wish, unless specifically prohibited. The Standards Board is to be abolished and, instead, councillors will have a duty to maintain high standards of conduct.

(continues on page 2)

**Could this be the new Jericho boatyard? See the full story on page 13.** *Image courtesy of Haworth Tomkins architects*



As regards planning, parish councils or other 'communities' may develop neighbourhood plans that must conform to strategic plans already adopted, but which will allow local interests to determine the details of development, which may then take place without the need for further specific planning consent.

Precisely how the provisions of the bill will be implemented and how they will really affect our Society remains to be seen. Some national house builders have referred to it as a 'NIMBYs charter', others see it as a breath of fresh air! Civic Voice, the national 'umbrella' organisation to which OCS belongs, believes it gives opportunities for organisations such as ours to become involved in providing services in local communities. More cynical voices suggest that the bill conceals a more fundamental shift in political philosophy. It will allow, indeed, encourage local authorities to opt out of the provision of 'non-essential' services, leaving this to volunteers, charities and private benefactors – in effect, 'voluntary taxation' of the wealthy.

Whether this is the true objective, and, if so, whether the Localism Bill is intended, or will prove to be an effective instrument of delivery is uncertain. In any event, it is likely to be very significant in terms of the interests and activities of our Society.

### Libraries – a test case?

This leads on to a current burning issue: the proposal to cease funding 20 of the county's 43 libraries, five of them in the city, to save £2 million over the next four years.

The Society has repeatedly expressed very serious concerns with the proposal to the councillors and officers responsible, and to local MPs. No consultation took place with users, the public, nor even councillors into any alternative options before the announcement was made. The legality of the proposals in terms of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 appears questionable, especially in the light of the precedent set last year when a similar proposal in the Wirral was challenged. The County Council has not considered a more imaginative approach such as revenue-generating services or cost savings which might have less-damaging consequences.

**We consider that the offer of future consultation on the possible transfer of responsibility for the running of the closed libraries to local community groups is no substitute for opportunities to discuss more fundamental principles.**

The Society has contributed constructive and practical suggestions for several less damaging and potentially effective ways of making cost savings in the library service, and in generating revenue, or providing funds from alternative sources.

Thanks in part to our representations, assurances have been given that the consultation process will be meaningful, though it remains unclear whether fundamental principles will be on the agenda. If the true objective, rather than simply saving relatively small amounts of money (equivalent to little more than the price of a pint of beer for each of the residents of the county, each year) is government withdrawal from the provision of public services such as libraries, then this may be a precursor of a great deal more to come.

### Oxford's Core Strategy

In the last Newsletter I referred to the impending publication of the report by the Inspector in charge of the Examination in Public of the Oxford Core Strategy. In the event, the report was published just before Christmas 2010 and the Core Strategy was found to be 'sound', but only subject to a considerable number of provisos and alterations to the text. The Core Strategy, which will guide the city's development until 2026, will not take effect until the amendments required by the Inspector are implemented and it is formally adopted by the full City Council. This is anticipated in spring 2011.

*Peter Thompson, Chairman*



*Peter Thompson, on the right, discussing the 'Barton boulevard' concept with Graham Smith. There is more on this story on the facing page.*

*Photo courtesy of The Oxford Mail / Damian Halliwell*



## Travel and transport matters

By the Travel Behaviour Group

### Local Transport Plan 3: 2011-2030

We submitted our formal response in January, concentrating mainly on section 13, which relates to Oxford City. You can read it on the Society's website. In general we supported the objectives of the plan, but noted a dearth of dates, priorities and timetables for most of the proposals, which may reflect the financial constraints being imposed by the Coalition Government.

We found little indication of willingness to cooperate with other authorities, which is essential if many of the objectives are to be achieved. Most of the proposals covered either the eastern arc or the city centre, or both, and we felt that these needed to relate to the rest of Oxford as well. There was also little about travel between Oxford and the county, and *vice versa*, which was surprising in view of the numbers of commuters.

We hoped that, despite financial stringency, opportunities might be taken during general maintenance to carry out minor improvements, such as of pavements and cycleways, at minimal extra cost and disruption. Although one or two token measures had been taken to prepare for an overall less carbon-intensive transport scenario, it was disappointing to find few further indications of how the necessary reductions might be achieved over the timescale of the Plan.

### Frideswide Square

Following submission of our views on the County's proposals for redesigning Frideswide Square, we were invited to meet the planners for an update on their current thinking. This is now based on their design with a central dual carriageway and a modest central reservation, wide enough to include a row of trees, and with a roundabout at each end. Modelling has shown that this should improve traffic flow.

We had some doubts about whether this would provide adequate space for bus stops, but were more concerned about the lack of detail about provision for cyclists and pedestrians. Each of these groups has strong 'desire lines' (preferred directions of movement) across the Square, which should ideally be incorporated into its design. Pedestrian crossings that do not relate to pedestrian desire lines are likely to be ignored and changes in surface colours or materials would be useful to guide cyclists. Likely redevelopment of buildings along Hythe Bridge Street and New Road had the potential to provide more space for cyclists and pedestrians, which could affect the desire lines, and we

urged that this be taken into account. Little attention has been paid to improving the sense of 'place' in the Square, which could influence pedestrian movements.

### Barton Area Action Plan

The new development planned on the north side of the A40 Northern Bypass is likely to be isolated if access is limited to the existing road connections to Barton. The idea of a boulevard similar to that at Sunderland Avenue (see photo opposite and below) was put forward to help overcome the physical and psychological barrier of the A40.

The idea has provoked considerable discussion and the final outcome appears likely to be determined by financial considerations. An at-grade junction



is likely to be favoured over building a new, and expensive, bridge. Easy access on foot, by cycle and public transport are essential if this development is to achieve the high standard the City wants.

### Iffley Road reconstruction

This project, to be carried out in two phases, in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, will extend the inbound cycle lane from Jackdaw Lane to Donnington Bridge Road, and provide raised crossings at the junctions with all remaining roads. The work will lead to major disruptions to traffic.

### Moving the Railway Station

The Group's view is that moving this to the Oxpens could have major benefits if it were accompanied by a proper interchange with buses to all parts of the city. We are now undertaking a more detailed study of the likely benefits and possible disadvantages. We plan to meet representatives of key groups who would be affected by such a move.

### Bus improvements

We hoped to announce the imminent start of the 'Quality Bus Partnership' between the Council and the two main bus companies, which will include among other things, the interchangeability of tickets. Details are not yet available as to the start date.

*Juliet Blackburn, Richard Bradley, Paul Cullen, Tony Joyce, Andrew Pritchard (Convenor), Graham Smith, David Townsend*

## Planning matters

By the Planning Sub-Committee

### *Updates on recent applications mentioned in the November 2010 Newsletter*

Proposals for the **Railway Station** are still *on hold*.

Demolition of **The Fox and Hounds Public House**, at **279 Abingdon Road**, to be replaced by a Tesco Food Supermarket was *refused* in November, in a third failed attempt to develop this prime site.

Behind **3 Bladon Close** a large five-bed house was built some months ago, not in accordance with the approved plans which were for a smaller three-bed dwelling. A retrospective application to approve the former was *refused* in October. In January a further application was made, proposing small alterations to retain four bedrooms and extensive planting of evergreen trees and a tall hedge, to protect the privacy of neighbours. The trees include two evergreen *Magnolia grandiflora* (starting at 3.5m tall), and two maples (starting at 5.5m tall). Speedy growth of these potentially enormous trees can be expected in this damp corner.

In *October* we objected to 14 applications, of which six have not yet been decided. **276 Woodstock Road**, a conspicuous limestone cottage close to the highway, had lost its garden to gravel car parking some years ago. It was renamed 'Reborn Cottage' about 2008 and several ways of developing the site were tried. One was for drastic conversion to five flats with a large extension for a house, losing the original form. This was *refused*. In 2010 rather more sympathetic plans came in and have been *permitted*. These refurbish the building and convert it to flats: two with two beds and one with three. The roof is to be raised to make use of the roof space.

In *November* we commented on 22 applications. Some had deficiencies, such as lacking adequate drawings, or were poorly presented. There has been an on-going saga at **3 Hernes Crescent**, just off the Banbury Road. Several earlier proposals were made to demolish a residential care home and develop its site, but these were *refused*. Now a new proposal is for nine dwellings, six with four beds, three with five beds, with some improvement on previous plans, but the buildings are too tall and monolithic, and provision for cycles and bins is poor. A decision is still *awaited*.

**Worcester Cottage**, **172 Walton Street** is an interesting, almost invisible, house in a garden on the north

side of Beaumont Street. It may be in part Victorian, or much older, since this could be the site of a medieval palace. Proposals by Worcester College to demolish parts and make alterations for teaching accommodation give cause for concern, as care should be taken that alterations sit happily with existing structures.

**St Clements Street car park** is also under threat. Four blocks of 141 study bedrooms are proposed with a reduced car park of 65 spaces plus 65 cycle parking spaces. Two objections are:

**1** that the proposed student accommodation is poorly designed and bland, and also is a commercial venture not belonging to any particular educational establishment, and

**2** that the new blocks would dwarf and obscure the Queen's College Florey Building, designed in the 1960s by the distinguished architect James Stirling, and recently awarded the honour of being 'Listed'.

Many *December* applications await decisions. **184**

**Woodstock Road** was clearly once a pleasant Edwardian house. Its demolition would be regrettable. Application has been made to replace it with a block of six flats on a larger footprint, more bulky and with a more massive roof, which would encroach on neighbours and destroy the integrity and pleasant character of Moreton Road. The flats within the roof space would be unacceptably cramped.

From **21 Polstead Road** came plans to build a side extension, in a design out of keeping with the existing Victorian house. The front door in particular is handsome and characterful, and should not be replaced by a bland modern door.

Owners of **2 Mortimer Drive**, **New Marston**, presented drawings showing that the plot already accommodates three structures alongside the original house. In August 2010 application was made for a one and two storey side extension, leaving very little amenity space for a family garden. This was *refused* in September. The current very similar application for side and rear extensions would also not leave adequate amenity space.

Permission was sought to demolish **31 Charlbury Road**, inside the Conservation Area, and to replace it with a new two-storey house, the proposed design being an exaggerated 'Victorian pastiche,' with elaborate steep roofs, out of character with the neighbourhood. Retention of the existing house would be far preferable.

(continues next page)

## Oxford Streets for People

By Richard Bradley, Coordinator

Our *Streets for People* campaign, which promotes streets as social spaces not just for traffic movement, continues to gather strength. Last year we focused on street parties, with considerable success. Street parties, as well as being fun in themselves, are an effective and easy way of bringing communities together, the results of which can be far reaching. For example, we know of one street where neighbours have come together to lobby the Council to close one end of the street permanently.

The success of Oxford's street parties has recently been recognised by the Department of Health's 'Putting People First' team, which promotes good practice in strengthening local communities. See their website: [www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC](http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk/BCC)

Why not help organise a party in your street? Some streets are holding parties at the time of the Royal Wedding while others are planning them for later in the year. See [oxstreets.org.uk](http://oxstreets.org.uk) for ideas.

But *Oxford Streets for People* is much more than street parties. This year we intend to audit a number of city centre streets and suggest ways in which they can be improved.

And we are actively involved in a Council initiative, called Wayfinding, to improve city centre signage and maps, with the aim of helping people explore the city on foot. The photo



shows the type of signage under discussion, which has information for visitors as well as wayfinding directions. The final choice has not yet been made.

If you would like to join the *Streets for People* team please get in touch. We'd be delighted to welcome you.

## Planning (continued from page 4)

One of the *January 2011* applications which has been approved was for dormer windows on front and rear roof slopes of **57 Frenchay Road**, though privacy in neighbouring gardens may be infringed.

At **1A Hayfield Road** an application to add three further flats, on ground floor, first and second floors, would make the building taller and more bulky, and out of keeping with the harmonious terraces of this Victorian housing.

At **16 Blenheim Drive** an example of a new insidious trend appeared in a proposal to demolish a pleasant three-bed family house and replace it by a semi-detached pair of dwellings each with four bedrooms and a study, occupying almost the full width of the plot and extending to the rear for about double the length of the existing house. The new building would take sunlight from the neighbouring house's patio and rear windows, and cast shade over much of its garden.

Gillian Argyle, Clive Booth, Kate Joyce, Neil MacLennan, Chris Rayson, Peter Thompson, Tim Treacher

## Corporate member news

By Gordon Balme and Stuart White

We warmly welcome **Savills (L & P) Oxford** as our newest corporate member and our 22nd recruit. As reported in the last newsletter we know that, working together, we can tackle some important issues all the more effectively.

Plans are proceeding for the proposed **Energy Seminar** where we hope at least two corporate members will be among the speakers - see diary notes in the Programme section, page 15. Topics will cover domestic and commercial design for sustainable energy and energy conservation. A **Transport Symposium**, another suggestion arising from the Corporate Breakfast Forum last September, is also in the planning stage and is provisionally scheduled for November.

We are always happy to approach any organisation which might support the work of the Society. Please do get in touch with us if you know of anyone with whom we should be in contact.

Email [corporate@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:corporate@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk) or phone 07505 756692

# Annual General Meeting, Thursday 17 March 2011

**Talk: 7:00 pm**

**AGM: 8:00 pm**

The 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place in the **Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street**. It will be preceded by a talk by Jeremy Mogford on *Business: past, present and future in Oxford*. The talk will commence at **7:00 pm**. Refreshments will be available from **6:30 pm**.

## AGENDA

- 1 President's opening remarks
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Thursday 18 March 2010
- 4 Matters arising from the minutes
- 5 Chairman's report
- 6 Treasurer's report and accounts for 2010
- 7 Planning report
- 8 Environment report
- 9 Election of Vice President

Anthony Michael Joyce. Proposed by the Chairman on behalf of the Executive Committee

- 10 Election of Officers for 2011-12
- 11 Election of Committee Members for 2011-12
- 12 Any other business of which notice has been given

## MINUTES of the AGM

**Thursday 18 March 2010, 8pm**

**Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street**

Present—in the Chair Mark Barrington-Ward, Sir Hugo Brunner, the Officers and Members of the Executive Committee and approximately 80 members

### 1 President's opening remarks

In welcoming members to the Annual Meeting the President referred to the successful celebration of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the current engagement of the Society in a wide range of activities including Ox-Clean, The City Museum and the Streets campaign. He hoped that if the City got the chance to build more homes it would remember the lessons to be learnt from the Blackbird Leys developments. The President thanked members for the opportunity to be involved with the Society and promised that he would continue to take an interest in our affairs.

### 2 Apologies for absence

The Hon Secretary reported that apologies had been received from the following members of the Executive: Juliet Blackburn, Keith Dyke, Liz Grosvenor, David Townsend and seven members.

### 3 Minutes of the last meeting (16 March 2009)

The Minutes were **AGREED** as a correct record and signed as such by the President.

### 4 Matters arising

None.

### 5 Chairman's report

The President reminded members that the Chairman's written report had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

In speaking to his report, the Chairman, Tony Joyce, commented that whilst one might have expected the pace of development to slacken in the current recession this had not happened with major activity at the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter and Brookes University among many important proposals. He also referred to the expansion of our activities. The Chairman commented on the sad loss of Michael Brown and expressed his thanks to members of the Executive Committee and Working Groups for all their efforts and expertise.



The Chairman's report was adopted by acclamation and Tony Joyce was thanked by the President for all the work he did for the Society.

### **6 Treasurer's report and accounts**

Gordon Balme (Hon Treasurer) reported on a successful 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Whilst the interest received on its invested capital had reduced sharply he reported that the Society was in a strong financial position. He urged everyone to persuade their friends and business partners to join us. The Accounts circulated in the March Newsletter and including the report of the Independent Examiner were approved by the meeting *nemine contradicente*.

The President thanked the Hon Treasurer for his work and his report.

### **7 Planning report**

The Planning Secretary, Kate Joyce, introduced the report, circulated previously to members, on the work of the Planning Group.

A Member commented that cycle parking provision in the proposed Westgate development was poor. Mrs Joyce assured the meeting that the Society usually pressed applicants to make suitable provision and would certainly look at that issue in any future response on Westgate. A Member suggested that we should have a meeting on Planning Issues and the Chairman undertook to discuss that with the Programme Group.

The President thanked the Group for their work and report.

### **8 Environment report**

The Environment Secretary, Ros Weatherall, thanked everyone who had been involved in the work described in her written report. She reported that the recent OxClean Spring Clean had been the best yet. The President thanked Ros Weatherall and all her colleagues.

### **9 Trustees report to the Charity Commission**

The contents of the formal report were noted.

### **10 Election of President**

Members signified their assent by acclamation when the Chairman thanked the retiring President, Mark Barrington-Ward for his editor's eye, knowledge of the City and great support during his term as our President. Sir Hugo Brunner KCVO (proposed by the Chairman on behalf of the Executive Committee and seconded by the retiring President) was elected to serve for an indefinite term.

### **11 Election of Officers for 2010-11**

Chairman – Tony Joyce (proposed by Richard Bradley, seconded by Liz Grosvenor)

Vice-Chairman – Peter Thompson (proposed by Richard Bradley, seconded by Christine Thompson)

Treasurer – Gordon Balme (proposed by Liz Grosvenor seconded by Juliet Blackburn)

Hon Secretary – Vernon Porter (proposed by Liz Grosvenor, seconded by Christine Thompson)

All of the above were elected.

The Chairman advised members that it was his firm intention to 'wind-down' his level of activity during the year and that he would not be seeking re-election next year. He hoped to hand over responsibilities at a digestible rate to Peter Thompson. The Vice Chairman said that he recognised that the learning curve would be steep but that he would do his best.

### **12 Election of Executive Committee members for 2010-11**

The President reported that the following members of the 2009-10 Committee were willing to continue and had been duly proposed and seconded: Juliet Blackburn, Richard Bradley, Liz Grosvenor, Kate Joyce, Ingrid Lunt, Pauline Martin, Christine Thompson, David Townsend, Ros Weatherall, Stuart White. The members of the Executive Committee were elected. The President thanked the out-going member of the Executive, Keith Dyke, for his considerable contribution.

### **13 Any other business**

The Vice Chairman appealed to members to become more actively involved with the running of the Society mentioning in particular the Cards Group, meetings organisation, the City Museum and OxClean. The Society's Archivist, Christine Butler, reported that the Society's papers covering the period 1969 - 2005 had now been deposited with the County Records Office at St Luke's, Cowley.

### **14 Remarks by Sir Hugo Brunner**

Sir Hugo thanked members for electing him as President of the Society. He said he was proud to be succeeding Mark Barrington-Ward and thanked him for the intelligence and experience he had brought to the Society's affairs. He had already been involved with the Society through OxClean and through the Blue Plaques Board and was delighted that the Society was contributing so vigorously to the life of the City. He looked forward to learning more about our work and to contributing.

There being no further business the President thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 9:01 pm.

## Chairman's report

Despite the economic downturn, the Society's activities continued unabated during 2010. **Membership numbers** continued to grow, our **programme of events** was as varied and oversubscribed as ever and the launch of our **e-bulletin** proved popular. An important innovation was a working breakfast for our **Corporate Members**, which gave them the opportunity to contribute to our thinking.

**OxClean**, an initiative we share with the City Council and other sponsors, was again very successful. More groups and individuals than ever turned out in March for the Spring Clean and the programme has now made real inroads into the detritus of a generation. There has been some progress on ring-road litter, though we do not yet have a consistent programme for achieving a clean and welcoming approach to the city.

The other great success story was **Streets for People** which we coordinate on behalf of the City Council. Under Richard Bradley's leadership, real cooperation was achieved between the Council, outside assistance and our valued sponsors. We had hoped for 25 **street parties**: the total of 54 measures the success of our efforts. We plan to encourage more events and a broader approach to the street scene in 2011.

Threatened with closure during the year, the **Museum of Oxford** has remained open with the loyal help of volunteers drawn from our membership. Following a forward-looking consultants' report, the future of the museum, better integrated into a more 'visitor friendly' Town Hall, now seems secure. Major funding will however be needed to realise the vision. The Museum's new activities will include more temporary and locally-inspired exhibitions. One of these, the oral history of the Covered Market, was sponsored by the Society and facilitated by members who volunteered as interviewers.

While commercial developments like the Westgate Centre and St Aldate's were delayed or cancelled, Oxford's health and education sectors have ensured that the **Planning Sub-Committee** has had a busy year. We were pleased to be involved in preliminary discussions on a number of college projects as well as the major development of the **Radcliffe Observatory Quarter** and the new **Physics and Chemistry** buildings. One of the most contentious was at the **Brookes Gipsy Lane** campus, where designs for the first stage in the redevelopment were finally accepted after major revision. We supported the City

Council's proposal to make **Jericho** a **Conservation Area** and the objectives of the first stage of the **Barton Area Action Plan**. At Barton, we believe that the biggest challenge is the divisive effect of the A40 and we have suggested that this be mitigated by creation of an 'urban boulevard'. We are concerned that the quality of this development may be compromised by the economic circumstances but we will continue to contribute to the discussions.

Many consultations – on the station extensions, Frideswide Square, the new Barton development and the county's next **Local Transport Plan (LTP3)** – have involved the **Travel Behaviour Group**. Planning consent for the extension of the **station** southwards has been granted but implementation, as with so many current projects, will depend on the availability of funds. The County Council has proposed various options for re-configuring **Frideswide Square**. The preferred options would improve the appearance of the square, but we remain critical of the inadequate provision for cyclists and pedestrians. Constructive consultation continues on this and on LTP3.

The **Localism Bill** will probably become law late in 2011. It will have major implications for planning and the provision of public services and we will be considering these in the coming months.

In December, Oxfordshire County Council announced that it intended to cease funding 20 of the 43 **libraries** in the county, including five in the city. I wrote to the Leader of the Council expressing the Society's concerns. We considered that the running of threatened libraries by volunteers from organisations such as ours was not viable and we suggested alternative strategies to save costs and generate income. The outcome remains uncertain.

The publication in December of the Inspector's Report on the City Council's **Core Strategy** was most significant. The Inspector found it to be 'sound', but imposed a number of important conditions and amendments to considerable parts of the text. The impact of these on future developments remains to be assessed.

There were a number of changes in the Society itself. Most significant, of course, was **Tony Joyce's** retirement as Chairman after 10 years in office. It is impossible to describe adequately Tony's huge contribution, presiding over a large growth in membership and elevating the Society's influence in all manner of fields. Fortunately, Tony continues to support and advise us. Plans are being formulated to mark his contribution by an annual award. **Mark Barrington-Ward** retired as our President in March 2009. His successor is **Sir Hugo Brunner** and his encouragement and support is already much appreciated.



**Ros Weatherall**, Environment Secretary, retires at the AGM after seven years in which she has attacked street clutter and rubbish with equal vigour.

**Paul Cullen**, who has brought immense expertise to the Travel Behaviour Group, has been succeeded by Andrew Pritchard, a long-standing member of the group. **Pauline Martin** handed over the Newsletter editorship to Hilary Bradley; we are delighted Pauline's talents will continue to be available to us.

Although it has been a very successful year, the Executive Committee believes that we need to **review our scope and remit**, investigate how we should reflect changing circumstances and stimulate the involvement of our membership. A dedicated sub-group is considering this.

Our healthy **accounts** reflect our Treasurer, Gordon Balme's, judicious financial management, the success of the Programme, the increasing number of Corporate Members and careful control of spending. On behalf of all the members I must thank the **Executive Committee** and the members of the specialist groups for the huge effort they put into the Society. As the incoming Chairman I must also thank them all for their support and encouragement to me. Finally, I must not only pay tribute to Tony Joyce but also thank him for his support and assistance and the patience and sensitivity with which he provides it. I shall endeavour to ensure that I deserve it!

*Peter Thompson, Chairman*

### Planning issues in 2010

We have continued to look at planning applications fortnightly in Ramsay House, examining all those which appear to us to need detailed scrutiny. The total number of planning applications registered over the year was about 3,400. Over the past six years the number has of course reflected the pattern of building in Oxford, rising irregularly from 2,553 in 2005 to 2,734 in 2009, with a further 666 in 2010. As usual we selected about half for proper scrutiny and decided to write letters with comments or objections on about **150 applications**. Of those which have so far been determined, 10 were concerned with commercial premises, 10 were for student accommodation or other university buildings and one involved a hospital; a high proportion (114) were for housing, and of those 76 involved alterations and additions, 18 were for new buildings and 20 for demolition-and-rebuild. After our frequent

complaints, the standard of presentation of plans does seem to be improving again.

It is interesting to try to assess how much our opinions and comments accord with the planning decisions made by the City Councillors and Planning Officers. Out of the objections we made in 150 letters in 2010, 24 of those applications were refused permission and 15 were withdrawn, in agreement with our comments. Many of those withdrawn quite soon return with modifications and eventually earn approval. However it is disappointing that 43 out of the 150 were given permission. So far, 68 remain to be decided.

Some of the large and complex proposals have progressed since our report in March 2009. Early in the year, **Keble College** put forward a revised plan for their new Quad on the Acland Hospital Site and we were pleased when it was approved, although the Research Building alongside, which we had criticised, was rejected. Plans for the two large Humanities and Mathematics buildings in the **Radcliffe Observatory Quarter** have been approved and construction may begin quite soon on this very large cleared site, which at present offers splendid views of the Tower of the Winds. It is good to see the completion of the Kendrew Quad at **St John's College**, which many members will remember seeing in construction during our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations.

New laboratories for Oxford University **Physics and Chemistry Departments** are under consideration, as also are buildings for **Mansfield College**. Revised plans have now been approved for the new building for **Oxford Brookes University in Gipsy Lane**, Headington, and demolition has already started on the site. As all of these schemes gradually take shape we shall certainly see dramatic changes.

We have greatly appreciated contributions made to our work on this committee by **Mark Barrington-Ward** and **David Townsend**. Both have participated regularly for many years, bringing their special skills and enormous detailed knowledge of Oxford to our fortnightly deliberations. We regret that both have recently found that they can no longer participate in this way - our warm thanks and good wishes to them both. We are very pleased that the team has recently been joined by **Sir Clive Booth** and **Neil MacLennan**.

*Gillian Argyle, Kate Joyce, Chris Rayson and Peter Thompson, Planning Sub-Committee*

## Environment issues in 2010

### OxClean Don't Drop It anti-litter campaign

When you read this the fourth **Spring Clean** will be over but the third in March 2010 attracted a record number of 117 groups and probably 1,700 volunteers over two days. Thanks to a grant from the Oxfordshire Community Fund we were able to give groups litterpickers to keep, to enable them to organise their own interim events. Feedback suggests that the city is gradually getting cleaner - groups sometimes had to search further afield. City Works again responded well.

We still need to tackle the sources of litter. We have support from both major bus companies to display our **Don't Drop It posters** and the taxis will show our roundel with the same message. We are keeping up contact with key city officers to explore ways we could support their efforts.

Working with **schools** is essential. Rosanne Bostock's team of volunteers visit each state school each term and once a year the tidiest secondary school wins a shield, while the primaries all get certificates. We helped Creation Theatre run **anti-litter workshops** in one school; this was so well received that we are seeking funds to extend this to others.

We kept up pressure relating to the **Ring Road**: finally new bins and warning notices appeared on the city's sections, as our photo shows. Litterpicking was — at last — done when the county had to close carriageways for maintenance. We hope this will continue. We now have two other district councils to chase, responsible for the southern sections of the Ring Road.



### Oxford Streets for People

Our campaign aims to remind people that streets are social spaces, not just for traffic, and to influence



Council policy with this in mind. In 2010 we focused on **street parties**, as they are an excellent way to bring neighbours together to 'celebrate' their street.

We were able to persuade the City Council to relax their rules on insurance (the Council no longer requires it for small non-public events) and to simplify the paperwork — ahead of a Government edict to do just this. Richard Bradley volunteered to co-ordinate the project and we also provided PR support and a dedicated **website** which enabled people to register their interest and get information — [www.oxstreets.org.uk](http://www.oxstreets.org.uk).

As a result of these measures a total of 54 street parties took place this year, the highest number per head of population in the UK according to Streets Alive, the charity that has guided us. We continue to liaise with the City Council and hope to support many more events in 2011, in particular in less confident communities in the city.

### Travel Behaviour Group

Dealing with the seemingly endless stages of consultation on the third Local Transport Plan has taken up most of this group's energy. The consultation draft is very long though short on actual plans, priorities or timetables. A final plan will be published mid-2011.

We responded to consultations, or attended meetings with officers, about changes to the station, about an Air Quality Management Plan for Oxford, about Frideswide Square and about proposals for new development at Barton. The severance effect of the 70mph dual carriageway A40 led to some interesting ideas about how to deal with this which eventually featured in *The Oxford Times*.

*Rosamund Weatherall, Environment Group Convenor*

## Income and expenditure account for the year ending 31 December 2010

2009	Income	2010	2009	Expenditure	2010
7,602.23	Subs/donations	7,943.56	4,116.45	Newsletter	3,033.15
10,360.90	Programme	4,415.95	6,176.83	Programme	3,277.26
329.10	Meetings	150.10	2,556.18	Meetings	1,491.69
1,701.00	Cards	868.50	1,540.49	Cards	757.02
53.00	Visions book	191.00	184.10	Publications	1,770.52
1,469.52	Gift Aid	1,536.13	678.00	Stamps, telephone, stationery, etc	508.98
500.00	Streets for People/Walk and Talk	475.00	215.00	Civic Voice/ ANTAS	515.00
311.09	CCLA Fixed Interest Fund for Charities	140.34	301.62	Blue Plaques	312.48
1,110.00	Corporate subscriptions	1,690.00	90.00	Planning papers	35.00
3,205.00	OxClean	800.00	310.00	Insurance	280.00
			288.00	Hire of Committee Room	288.00
			80.00	Independent Examiner's fee	80.00
			62.26	Miscellaneous	83.26
			250.00	Donations	-
			82.24	Schools Litter Award	56.00
			130.00	Chairman's allowance	105.00
			5,050.04	OxClean	1,910.87
			743.24	Streets for People/Walk and Talk	494.49
			1,039.35	Membership services	1,682.70
			2,748.04	Excess of income over expenditure	1,148.76
<b>26,641.84</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>18,210.58</b>	<b>26,641.84</b>		<b>18,210.58</b>

## Balance sheet 31 December 2010

2009	Assets	2010
24,872.24	CCLA Fixed Interest Fund for Charities	26,012.58
692.30	HSBC current account	985.72
	Less un-presented cheques	<u>285.00</u>
<b>25,564.54</b>		<b>26,713.30</b>
	<u>Represented by: General fund</u>	
22,816.50	Balance 1 January 2010	25,564.54
2,748.04	Plus: Excess of income over expenditure in year	1,148.76
<b>25,564.54</b>		<b>26,713.30</b>

These accounts were approved by the Trustees on 1 February 2011  
Chairman of Trustees : Peter Thompson                      Hon Treasurer: Gordon Balme



## Financial review

The accounts for 2010 show a surplus of income over expenditure of £1,148.76. About half the surplus for 2009, an exceptional year, this is still a modest increase over the surplus in 2008.

Income from general and corporate subscriptions, the tax refund from Gift Aid and the visits and walks programme all rose slightly. Income from the sale of cards was down a little on 2009 but there was a modest income from the sale of publications. Interest on our balances in the CCLA deposit account has gone down again as Bank Rate continues to be held at 0.5%. Obtaining grants to support the various initiatives that we have started/continued is an important function of the groups involved and we have had grants totalling £1,275 this year.

Expenditure has been well controlled again in two major areas: the Newsletter costs have fallen to £3,033 by rationalising the format used and issuing an electronic version to many members; the nett cost of the speaker meetings has fallen from £2,227 to £1,341. However, general costs and the servicing of the membership, mailings and the AGM, have continued to rise. We have again supported the newly-named Civic Voice with a grant of £500, a level of payment we may have to make each year if it is to be adequately funded.

Two major items of expenditure were the publication of Mark Barrington-Ward's booklet and the event for corporate members. This was appreciated by both parties and seems certain to lead to more involvement of our corporate members in the affairs of the Society. Support for OxClean has dropped from a nett cost of £1,800 in 2009 to £1,110 this year. Little support was required for the Streets for People programme.

The Trustees remain confident that the Society has adequate income and reserves to support an expanding level of activities to meet the challenges of the future. The accounts have been examined as required by the Charity Commission and the Trustees approved them on 1 February 2011.

**Gordon Balme, Hon Treasurer**

## Independent examiner's report

Report on the accounts of the trust for the year ended 31 December 2010 which are set out on the preceding pages

### Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and examiner

As the trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43(7)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention

### Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(d) of the Act. The examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the trustees and comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence which would be required in an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

### Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

- 1 which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
  - to keep proper accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Act and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the requirements of the Act have not been met; or
- 2 to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Brian Causby CPFA

16 January 2011

## Blue plaques in 2010

By Eda Forbes, Oxon Blue Plaques Board

At Cholsey we honoured **Dame Agatha Christie** and her husband, the archaeologist Sir Max Mallowan, at Winterbrook House where she did most of her writing from 1934 (see the photo below). Up in Banbury at Tooley's Boatyard we commemorated the centenary of the engineering historian **Tom Rolt**. His 1939 cruise in the narrow boat 'Cressy' through the decaying canals led him to found the Inland Waterways Association. At the northerly reach of the county we celebrated **Samuel, Joseph and John Knibb**, born and bred in the tiny village of Claydon, who became distinguished 17<sup>th</sup> century clockmakers. John was twice Mayor of Oxford.

The plaque at 12 Oxford Road, Old Marston, for the biochemist **Norman Heatley**, recognises his key role in the development of penicillin 1939–43. 34 Oxford Road, Littlemore, now bears a plaque commemorating the extraordinary headmaster and Man of Letters, **Edmund Arnold Greening Lamborn** (1877–1950), a prolific and esteemed writer on local history subjects among other things.

The grand finale of the year was the commemoration of the **first Oxford Playhouse** (1923–38) at 12 Woodstock Road. Here the young John Gielgud and other famous names trod the boards. Priscilla Tolkien unveiled the plaque and shared her childhood memories of performances there, including the first pantomime *Dick Whittington*. The principal boy was the young Joan Hickson, later to become the definitive Miss Marple.

Please visit our revised website (still at [www.oxfordshireblueplaques.org.uk](http://www.oxfordshireblueplaques.org.uk)) for more detailed information and lots of photographs. We are most grateful to Stephanie Jenkins, our new webmaster, for her superlative support.



## The Jericho boatyard

By Tony Joyce, Chairman, Jericho Living Heritage Trust

An exciting masterplan for developing the boatyard went on display in December and received an enthusiastic welcome. The photograph on our front cover shows what could be achieved on the site, a stark contrast from the dereliction that greets us now.

In 2008 Spring Residential lost their appeal against the City Council's refusal of planning consent for housing development on the Jericho boatyard site. They subsequently went into administration and the area has remained boarded up and derelict.



In mid 2010 the Jericho Living Heritage Trust obtained a grant from the Community-builders Fund to conduct a feasibility study of how the site could be developed under community ownership, incorporating, as the Local Plan had specified, some residential use, a new community centre, a public open space, replacement riverside/canal uses and a new bridge over the canal for pedestrians and cyclists.

Architects Haworth Tomkins were appointed and after consultation with those representing the various community interests (JLHT, Jericho Community Association, Jericho Community Boatyard and St Barnabas Church and Parish Council) and an assessment of the available options, they produced the masterplan which was displayed at a public consultation in the church.

Acquiring the site from the administrators and implementing the masterplan will require the continued close cooperation between the representative groups and, of course, major financial support.

**The achievement would be a magnificent enhancement of the Jericho area, shortly to achieve Conservation Area status, and a fitting celebration of St Barnabas Church's recent promotion to the Grade 1 List.**

## Members' booking form April–September ticketed events

**Closing date for applications: 7 April**

Please enclose:

1. cheque/s payable to Oxford Civic Society, one for each event
2. one stamped, addressed envelope for all tickets

**Member's name** .....

BLOCK CAPS PLEASE

**2nd member's name** .....

IF APPLICABLE

**Address** .....

**Post code** ..... **Phone** .....

**Email** .....

EVENT	No of tickets	Amount enclosed
Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre, Standlake, Weds 11 May at 2.30pm	.....@£7	
Bernwood Meadows walk Sun 15 May at 10am	.....@£4	
Victorian and Edwardian Oxford walk Thurs 7 July at 2pm	.....@£4	
Victorian and Edwardian Oxford walk Sat 16 July at 2pm	.....@£4	
Victorian and Edwardian Oxford walk Weds 20 July at 6pm	.....@£4	
Quiz trail from Lincoln College Weds 13 July at 6.30pm	.....@£4	
Visit to Corpus Christi College Sat 6 August	.....@£7	
Visit to Oxford Science Park Thurs 22 September	.....@£7	

**Note:** Tickets are allocated soon after the closing date for applications but if you miss it, it's always worth asking if there are places left. A ballot for tickets will be held if necessary. Cheques are banked three weeks after ticket issue; after that no refunds can be given.

**Send completed form to:**

**Alan Hobbs**  
**66 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA**  
**tel/answerphone: 01865 248 105**



**Programme  
calendar**  
**'Cut out and keep'**

### April–September 2011

#### \*ticketed events

**Wednesday 20 April:** 7.30 for 8pm  
Oxfam's battle against poverty. Talk by Thomas Schultz-Jagow at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

**Wednesday 11 May\*** 2.30pm  
Visit to Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre, Standlake

**Sunday 15 May \*** 10am  
Walk round Bernwood Meadows with Caroline Jackson Houlston

**Thursday 9 June** 7.30 for 8pm  
The making of Victorian Oxford. Talk by Dr William Whyte at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

**Thursday 7 July\*** 2pm  
**Saturday 16 July \*** 2pm  
**Weds 20 July \*** 6pm  
Victorian and Edwardian Oxford walk with local historian, Liz Woolley

**Wednesday 13 July \*** 6.30pm  
Quiz trail through the city centre, starting at Lincoln College

**Saturday 6 August \*** 10am  
Visit to Corpus Christi College, with a talk by Dr Eric Sidebottom

**Thursday 22 September \*** 2.30pm  
Visit to Oxford Science Park to see the buildings and sculpture

**Saturday 24 September\***  
Energy seminar at St Hilda's College – details to be announced in the next Newsletter

**\*Contact for booking/tickets only:**  
Alan Hobbs, 66 Southfield Road,  
Oxford OX4 1PA  
01865 248 105





## Programme April – September 2011

Digital photos of OCS events (max 4, preferably captioned) can be sent to [webmaster@oxfordcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@oxfordcivicsociety.org.uk)

### Open talks – all welcome

no pre-booking, members free, non-members £4 at the door

#### **Weds 20 April: Oxfam's battle against poverty**

*Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street*

Coffee/tea 7.30 pm, talk 8pm

Thomas Schultz-Jagow, Director of Communications at Oxfam, discusses Oxfam's changing priorities over the years, from its founding in 1942 to its current work in over 70 countries.

#### **Thurs 9 June: The making of Victorian Oxford**

*Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street*

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

Dr William Whyte, History Fellow of St John's College, introduces architects from the Victorian age, when both Town and Gown expanded greatly. Among architects to be considered will be Sir Thomas Jackson, whose designs include the Examination Schools, the Bridge of Sighs, the New Quadrangle at Brasenose College and the two Oxford High Schools, for boys and girls.

### Members only visits and walks

\*tickets required: bookings for all these events by 7 April

#### **Weds 11 May, 2.30pm: Visit to the Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre, Standlake** Tickets: £7

The Centre houses major collections of archaeology, social history, crafts and arts: items range from Bronze Age beakers to bonnets and boots, from bills to bullock carts. A guided tour will include the opportunity to find out about work in progress in the conservation area.

#### **Sunday 15 May, 10am: Bernwood Meadows walk** Tickets: £4

Another chance to visit Bernwood Meadows, near Stanton St John, managed by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust. Caroline Jackson Houlston, a BBOWT volunteer and botanical artist, will lead a circular two-hour walk round ancient 'ridge and furrow' meadows and the pond, home to more than 100 plant species and famous for butterflies and insects.

#### **Thurs 7 July, 2pm; and Sat 16 July, 2pm; and Weds 20 July, 6pm:**

#### **Victorian and Edwardian Oxford walk** Tickets: £4

Leisure and entertainment in Victorian and Edwardian Oxford was central to daily life. Join local historian Liz Woolley for a 90-minute walk, starting from the Victorian gym in Alfred Street, near the Bear Inn, and ending at the former Big Game Museum opposite Somerville. The walk also takes in long-forgotten baths and racquets courts, a Temperance Hotel and the 'old' New Theatre.

#### **Weds 13 July, 6.30pm: Quiz 2011** Tickets: £4

Following the success of the 2009 Quiz trail, this second self-guided walk has been devised to discover some of the history, quirks and unusual features of the city centre. Collect a quiz sheet and directions for a one-hour

walk at Lincoln College, Junior Common Room bar and return there for tea, a cash bar and quiz answers! Book with a friend, alternatively pairs will be arranged on the evening.

#### **Sat 6 August, 10am: Visit to Corpus Christi College** Tickets £7

Corpus Christi, founded in 1517, is an intimate college with splendid buildings, both old and new. Tea/ coffee will be served from 10 am in the Dining Hall (follow the red arrows). At 10.30 Dr Eric Sidebottom will talk on the history and architecture of the College in the MBI Al Javier Building, followed by visits to the charming Chapel, Hall and Library.

#### **Thurs 22 September, 2.30pm: Visit to Oxford Science Park** Tickets: £7

Now home to over 50 businesses, this hidden development in a landscaped setting on the south east edge of the city must rank as one of the sights of Oxford. Charles Young, the Magdalen College Senior Bursar, will give an introductory talk in the Magdalen Centre, followed by a short walk through the park to the Sadler Building to see 'Fraction (9:8)', a spectacular 14-metre sculpture by Conrad Shawcross. Followed by tea.

#### **Date for your diary – Saturday 24 September Energy seminar, St Hilda's College**

Sustainable energy and energy conservation are key topics for homes, businesses and designers alike. This half-day seminar will explore the issues.

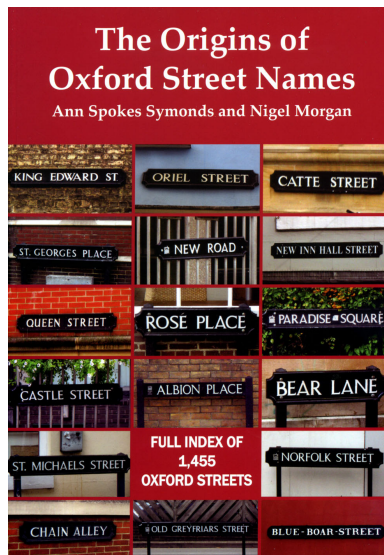
Full details of the programme, speakers and ticket prices will appear in the July Newsletter.

## Bookshelf

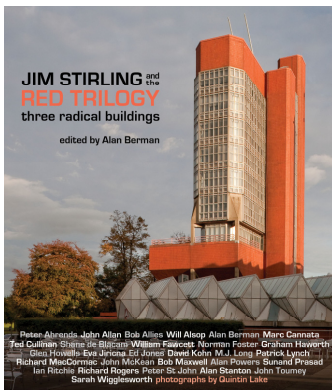
### Oxford street names

Ann Spokes Symonds and Nigel Morgan have written a guide to the origin of the city's street names. Introductory chapters cover some common themes, such as commemorating celebrities and churches, while the index to street names has over 1,500 entries.

The book is published by Robert Boyd, price £11.95. ISBN: 978 1 899536 99 3



### The Florey building—and more



Alan Berman, an Oxford architect who recently addressed the Society, is the editor of a new book which re-evaluates three 'red buildings' designed by Jim Stirling. One of the buildings is the Florey Building in St Clements which seems to be loved and loathed in equal measure.

*Jim Stirling and the Red Trilogy: Three Radical Buildings* is published by Frances Lincoln, price £30. ISBN: 9780711231443

## Museum of Oxford

**Who is Oxford's Covered Market? Until 31 March**  
OCS volunteers recently interviewed the market traders in support of this exhibition which features the personal histories of the Covered Market traders, their customers and other influential people. As well as audio-visual material, the exhibition includes newspapers, professional photographs and photographs taken by Oxford school children.

The Museum needs volunteers to help with its day to day running. If you can help please contact Vanessa Lea on (01865) 252 761, email [vlea@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:vlea@oxford.gov.uk).

## Contact us

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