

# VISIONS

No 123, November 2012

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*Photo: New development at St Clement's car park. See p6*



## Oxford – museum or crucible?

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

**The issues currently facing our city planners pose real dilemmas. The heart of the issue is whether we want simply to preserve Oxford or allow it to fulfil its potential in a rapidly changing world.**

The past months in Oxford have certainly been interesting; there have been public examinations of the City Council proposals for the new Barton development and Sites and Housing policies, and radical revisions to national planning arrangements, with more proposed, which have thrown up a huge range of issues. The conclusions of these machinations will determine how the city develops, how its

character changes and how we, and our successors, enjoy it.

Nationally however, our economic order seems in danger of collapsing as it becomes increasingly clear that the relative prosperity of the last 30 years was founded on credit-fuelled consumerism and exploitation of finite and diminishing natural resources. Our manufacturing capacity has declined, we are increasingly dependent on imported fuel, and much of our energy generation and distribution, transport and communications, manufacturing and service industries are now foreign-owned. Financial power is rapidly moving to Asia and the Far East. At the global level, our profligacy in the use of fossil fuels has already compromised, if not jeopardised, the future.

## Dates for your diary

### AGM

**Thursday 14 March 2013**

See page 11 for details of the meeting and speaker. See the back page for information about elections to the Committee.

**OxClean Spring Clean 2013**

**Friday 1 March and  
Saturday 2 March**

Please save the date!



Oxford Science Park, the Magdalen Centre

We seem to be in an era of chickens-coming-home-to-roost, where recession or low growth becomes normality, our ability to fund our cherished institutions is threatened, and the benevolence of our natural environment can no longer be relied on.

### Unique assets ...

Against this perhaps depressing background, Oxford has a fantastic legacy in its built environment and as the home not only of two highly-regarded educational institutions, but also of many new, cutting-edge industries. Oxford offers unique and widening cultural opportunities of all kinds, and the world-wide reputation of the city, based on this heritage, attracts nine million visitors each year. Students now comprise around 30 per cent of Oxford's population; 40,000 commuters a day arrive in the city, and 14,000 live in Oxford while working elsewhere. Oxford is not just a museum piece, but a vibrant commercial centre widely regarded as a great place to work, to live, to enjoy oneself and to set up an enterprise.

Many of us who live here are thus still insulated from the harsh realities outlined above, which are already severely affecting other towns and cities, and, indeed, countries. But even here, there is a gulf between different parts of our society and huge discrepancies in social indicators such as health, educational achievement and affluence.

It seems clear that Oxford and its region with its intellectual capability, and scientific and engineering expertise, will grow in importance to the national economy. Research and high-tech industry, with their supporting services, are becoming increasingly vital to the national economy as well to

the development of solutions to the national and global problems we face, such as the exploitation of 'green' sources of energy. We have to balance stimulation and encouragement of the economic activity which underpins our 'civilisation' with preservation of what is really important in our heritage. This difficult act is getting steadily harder, but burying our heads won't ease the difficulty.

### ... and special challenges

Oxford's popularity has its own consequences – roads and trains are jammed, there is huge pressure for development and housing is unaffordable for many. Those who cannot compete in the housing market have a difficult time, and over 6,000 people are now registered by the City Council as needing affordable housing (up by 1,000 in 18 months). The people we rely on to provide public services often cannot afford to live here. Potential start-up and expanding enterprises are held back by the inability to recruit, our road and rail transport infrastructure creaks with the weight of traffic, parking is a contentious issue and the attractiveness of much of the city is compromised by accommodation of the car, and its increasing conflict with the needs of other transport modes.

**We simply cannot afford to walk backwards through life, striving to maintain some illusory golden age of Oxford's past.**

Planning for the future is thus a critical issue. It is not simply a matter of buildings and roads, but the creation of an environment in which communities thrive and a happy and productive society can develop. We thus have to make key decisions on where we accommodate the wealth-generating institutions of the future, where and how we house the people who will work in them, how we provide for them to travel and how we supply the services they will expect to receive.

### Which cows should be sacred?

Against this background, is the Green Belt to be eternally sacrosanct? Should we continue to sacrifice our country-

side, our streets and our communities to the car? How far and how fast should alternative transport strategies evolve? What is the balance between loss of our heritage, urban and rural, and meeting the needs of future communities? How does individual freedom and convenience square with collective responsibility and the needs of future generations? Can we 'green' our city while creating viable and sustainable communities? Increasingly, we face tough choices, as our Vice-Chairman, Sir Clive Booth, indicates on page 5.

Our responsibility to the future should be more important than our concerns for ourselves. We need to look at the past and learn from our mistakes, but we have to look ahead and do our best to create a local economy and a built and social environment which ensures our descendants can enjoy Oxford as much as we do. We simply cannot afford to walk backwards through life, striving to maintain some illusory golden age of Oxford's past.

Our Planning and Transport Groups are actively involved with these issues, responding to consultations on specific proposals, lobbying as necessary and cooperating where we can, to inform ourselves, influence decisions and promote outcomes which we think are likely to be the most appropriate.

We always welcome new participants in our groups, so please do not hesitate to join us!

*Peter Thompson  
Chairman*





# Retirements – and opportunities

The members of our special-interest groups really make the Society what it is – our activities and areas of involvement are determined by their interests and dedication. Five friends who have done a lot for us are soon to retire and I want to pay tribute to their work. I also want to issue a warm invitation to new volunteers to help us to maintain our momentum.



When **Gordon Balme** retires at our AGM he will have served as our Honorary **Treasurer** for nine years. During that time he has not only 'kept the books' and made sure

that our excellent speakers and walks leaders got paid on time, he has also helped us to spend our money wisely in support of our campaigns and objectives. His vast experience has contributed to our discussions of Oxford's future, including issues such as the libraries campaign. His Yorkshire wit has often lightened our conversations!

**David Townsend** has been a long-serving member of the Executive, as well as a keen member of the Transport Group, with an enthusiasm for railways and an encyclopaedic knowledge of Oxford's buses. His monitoring of bus services, routes and developments has been invaluable, as has his recall of the past from his time as a City Councillor. David is now retiring for reasons of ill-health and we wish him well. We will miss his sage advice.



The nature of **Communications** has changed radically since **Pauline Martin** (pictured above) joined the team in 2003, to be followed in 2006 by **Christine Thompson** (shown below during OxClean). The Internet is now our main channel of communication with a wide audience. Pauline and Christine developed the effective use of our website, have driven its recent modernisation and got us to tweet. Pauline edited this newsletter for many years and, with Christine, also steered the redesign under its new title, **Visions**.



As members of the Communications team, they have brought sheer professional competence and verve to both the OxClean and Streets for People campaign teams and to supporting events such as the recent Neighbourhood Planning Forum. These campaigns and events would not have had

half their impact without Pauline and Christine's contributions.

**Stuart White** joined the Executive in 2007, providing an important link to the University and representing our corporate members. For much of this period he also organised the selection and production of the Society's greetings cards,



which gave pleasure to many. We offer all of these friends our heartfelt thanks for their enormous contributions of time, interest and expertise towards making the Society what it is. The reasons for which they are moving on are varied, but they will carry with them our gratitude and very best wishes for the future.

## Please join us!

These departures create opportunities for new people to become involved. We need a new Hon Treasurer. We also need people to help plan and execute our campaigns, OxClean in particular, and to help us to get our message out effectively.

In return we offer friendly, stimulating and supportive colleagues; the chance to contribute to a whole range of issues – community capital, planning, regeneration, ring roads, litter, transport and traffic; and opportunities to work on our communications via the website, tweeting, publicity and media links.

Perhaps most of all we can offer you a role in helping to **Shape Oxford's Future** as part of a dynamic and increasingly-respected organisation.

If you'd like to discuss how you can contribute, please get in touch with Vernon Porter or me. Our contact details are given on the back page.

*Peter Thompson*  
Chairman



# Streets for People – towards a ‘good place to live’

## Oxford's charms are world-renowned but are its buildings and infrastructure the only yardsticks of the city's success?

With its combination of architectural gems, medieval streets, river and canal-side scenery, and some fine suburbs, Oxford is a city with few rivals. Despite some deficiencies, it is also relatively easy to travel around. Of course, the Society strives to ensure this remains the case, while recognising that we have a living and developing city.

For many people however, the beauty of a city is not the most important factor in their view of living there. If you ask people ‘what do you especially like about where you live?’ the responses will typically be ‘I feel I belong’, ‘there is a real sense of community’, ‘I have nice neighbours’, ‘we have good facilities nearby’. The Society recognises the importance of **community** in defining a truly successful city.

This is why the Society has supported libraries, engages in community politics and campaigns for ‘streets for **people**’, not just streets in which to drive and park cars. And it is why we promote the idea of street parties as a means to develop neighbourliness.

This year has been a bumper year for street parties, with at least 85 taking place. The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics have, of course, been significant factors in generating this record number. Our challenge for next year is to convince people that a street party is a good thing in its own right – there is no need to wait for a national event.

The feedback from this year's parties has again shown how effective they are in breaking down barriers and building relationships.

## On Foot in Oxford

We are working on a programme to encourage more people to walk and to explore our city. Working with **Oxford Pedestrians Association** and the Oxford group of the **Ramblers Association**, we are gathering information about published walks and will consider how to collate it and make it available to residents and visitors. One idea is to make this information available through the website which supports the new Wayfinding signs (see below).

We are also looking carefully at a new cycle/bus map of Oxford produced by **Cyclox** (available from some bike shops, £1) to see if walking routes could be included.

## The Wayfinding Project

Members may have seen the new information and directional signs which have recently appeared in the city centre. We have been closely involved with the **City Council** in this Wayfinding project, contributing to their design, locations and content. We have also identified posts, signs and clutter in the vicinity of the Wayfinding signs which we think could be removed.

Associated with the Wayfinding signs is a website [www.oxfordexplore.com](http://www.oxfordexplore.com) which contains more information about



the history and sights in each locality. The website can be accessed from smart phones using a symbol (called a QR code) on each sign or you can explore it in the usual way. Do take a look at it.

We believe that the Wayfinding signs and the **Oxford Explore** website are excellent additions to Oxford's information provision for residents and tourists alike. We look forward to hearing the views of members. If the project is a success we hope funding will be found to extend this scheme both in content and to other parts of Oxford.

Oxford Streets for People: *Richard Bradley (Co-ordinator), Tony Joyce, Pauline Martin, Christine Thompson, Ros Weatherall*

## Walks on the web

The **Royal Geographical Society** has recently published three walks in Oxford which you can download free from its Discovering Britain website – [www.discoveringbritain.org](http://www.discoveringbritain.org)

The walks encourage people to explore and understand Britain's diverse local landscapes, both in towns and in the countryside. Each walk is themed and the Oxford walks include how

people enjoyed their leisure, manufacturing in the city, and ‘streams and spires’, about Oxford's waterways. Liz Woolley, who leads many of our own walks, is a contributor to the series.

Each walk is accompanied by a map, written descriptions of the places of interest and an audio version that you can download to your I-Pod. There's a list of further reading and some fascinating photos and illustrations.





## Expansion and extensions – tough choices

### With the planning system itself under threat, Clive Booth looks at some issues facing an expanding Oxford.

Imagine. You are sitting in your garden when builders arrive at your neighbour's home. Over the fence, they tell you that they are going to build an extension of eight metres (26 feet) on the detached house next door and no, it does not need planning permission under the Government's three-year relaxation of the planning rules. More builders arrive at the neighbour's house on the other side of your garden. They say the same thing. Your garden becomes a sort of tunnel. You wake up in a lather – it was only a nightmare.

Sadly, this might soon be a reality. The Government has announced that they are to consult on this and other proposals to revive building activity. Our Planning Group examines hundreds of planning applications each year and submits comments on many extensions that are excessively large. The Society intends to oppose the proposals and argue for retaining the current limits of four metres for detached houses and three metres for other houses.

### Neighbourhood and Community Planning

Meanwhile, some Oxford communities have been busy formulating their ideas for Community and Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Planning can in theory enable local communities to shape their physical surroundings. The trouble is that the route to a Neighbourhood Plan is tough and complex. However, the Society's recent discussions with the City Council suggest that there may be a short cut for communities to achieve their goals. If a community can gather comprehensive evidence of local people's views on what needs to be done, the City will be ready to discuss

how far these can be incorporated into the Local Plan without having to go through the expensive and time-consuming processes of independent examination and referendum. We welcome this idea and hope that the City will pursue it actively. We also welcome the Council's efforts to encourage people to develop Community Plans (which are much more broad ranging than Neighbourhood Plans), including offering training.

### Some thorny planning issues

Why is there no Master Plan for Headington, given the huge developments in NHS, research and higher education in the next few years? What is being done to meet the Government's targets for housing in Oxford for 2017 and 2022? Where is it sensible to locate new residences for students? What should happen to the Jericho canal site? Should restrictions on houses in multiple occupation be tightened?

These are some of the many questions that have arisen during discussion of the City's Sites and Housing Development Plan. Members have been working actively together to influence the outcomes. We take our motto 'Shaping Oxford's Future' very seriously! The Sites and Housing Plan will potentially determine the fate of 65 sites across Oxford. In the public hearings over the summer, the City's proposals have been ably scrutinised by the Inspector and we are hopeful that the final plan – to emerge early in 2013 – will reward our efforts to influence it positively.

But by far the largest piece of the City's housing jigsaw is the Barton Area Action Plan, adding some 850 new dwellings and services west of Barton. The location of Barton outside the ring road poses a number of challenges if the huge new development is not to

suffer the consequences of being isolated from the rest of Oxford. There are essentially two scenarios. The first is a thriving community enjoying good physical access to employment, shops, public services and entertainment in the rest of the city and benefiting the Oxford economy. The second scenario is one in which the isolation from these services results over time in social problems that will be a serious challenge for the City and a drain on its resources.

The City Council's proposals for Barton have sought to ease communication between Barton and the city by creating an adequate number of crossing points on the ring road for buses, cyclists and pedestrians and more limited access for private vehicles, while introducing speed limits for vehicles using the ring road. The Society has argued in evidence for a more sophisticated approach, recognising, too, that the concerns of Headington residents and the preservation of the Conservation Area must influence the solution. We see our role as contributing to the development of solutions, drawing not only on UK experience, but also on that in the rest of Europe.

More detailed information on all these issues can be found on our website.



*Dorset House, London Road – new accommodation for over 300 Oxford Brookes students*



# Planning comments – making room for students

**The 70 applications we commented on from June-September included some controversial plans for student accommodation.**

## St Clement's car park

The first plans to develop student accommodation here were rejected on the grounds of design, the level of parking proposed and the inadequacy of the replacement parking during construction. A new application contained new and much improved plans though still, in our opinion, retaining some problems of impact on neighbouring buildings in this conservation area. Temporary parking was re-sited on the Marston Road. West Area Planning Committee, while accepting the new design, still considered the parking arrangements inadequate and refused the application. On call-in to the Planning Review Committee however the developers produced fresh proposals to retain limited parking on the site during development by phasing the construction, still retaining the Marston Road car park. Despite continuing anxiety from local residents and businesses these final proposals were accepted. The construction process will now extend to 69 weeks and for periods during this the on-site parking will reduce from the existing 115 to 25 spaces. It will be a difficult time for local residents and businesses.

## Luther Court

We welcomed the objectives of this application by A2 Dominion Trust. These are to provide more and better affordable housing on the site, create an active and interesting frontage to Thames Street as a significant gateway to the central city area and to design out some of the long-standing social problems of proximity to the Medical Centre and O'Hanlon House.

The proposal was to demolish the outdated housing and to replace it with three high (five- and six-storey) 'landmark' buildings, two containing 42 self-contained flats and the other student accommodation of 82 study bedrooms as an enabling project to finance the whole development. The suggested user of the accommodation block was a residential teaching college for 14-18 year-old students. The West Area Planning Committee asked for radical modification on the grounds of design, the impact on views of the city by the obtrusive and highly-coloured proposed buildings and the age range of student occupants.

## Cotuit Hall

This application, which is also for a large concentration of under-18 students, in the Headington Hill Conservation area, is still *pending*.

## Harris Manchester College

The College proposes to build an unusual clock tower on Mansfield Road including five student rooms and to make alterations to its listed wall. It would be a pity to lose the charming small side doorway with a stone arch and door jambs. Plans have been *accepted* but final design details of a new ornate entrance archway remain to be agreed.

## At the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, a new statue of Triton replaced



*the original, which is being restored.*

*Photo courtesy of Rob Judges*

## Housing

At **33 Leckford Road** we opposed a side extension with a copper roof and unsuitable window glazing as out of keeping with neighbouring properties and not likely to 'preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area'. Revised plans did not go far enough to meet objections and this application has been *refused*.

The Chequers Inn at **44 St Thomas' Street** has remained unoccupied for too long but may now be altered to provide six small dwellings. It seems that too many are being proposed for this site which could be very cramped.

Demolition of a double garage and erection of a two-storey side extension was proposed at **18 Victoria Road**. This was *refused* because it would dominate the plot and also loss of two car spaces would cause parking problems.

**37 Meadow Prospect** is part of a group of pleasant small houses looking out on to Port Meadow. A large extension proposed here would render the house too overbearing on its neighbours and block gaps between the houses which permit views of Port Meadow. It would also be a dangerous precedent for other such development.

At **Bury Knowle**, Headington, permission has been *granted* to convert the barn and stables into housing, retaining the interesting old buildings. At **29 Old High Street**, Headington, an application is *pending* to demolish some part of this building to convert it into a five-bedroom house with some amenity space. The re-use of this house on the edge of the conservation area will be very welcome.

Planning Group: *Gillian Argyle, Clive Booth, Kate Joyce (Convenor), Neil MacLennan, Chris Rayson, Stuart Scott, Peter Thompson, Tim Treacher*





## Oxford - a key interchange on the new 'electric spine'

**The creation of an 'electric spine' for the country's railways with Oxford as a key interchange makes it essential to improve the station. Our priority has been to campaign vigorously for its relocation to Oxpens where it can also be the focus of a new transport hub for the city.**

We were taken by surprise by the Government's announcement of the decision not only to electrify the railway to Oxford from Paddington, but also to create an 'electric spine' for the country, with electric trains running from Oxford along East-West rail as soon as it is opened, and also north through Banbury, Leamington Spa to Coventry, primarily for freight from Southampton. However, although the need to improve Oxford station as part of this upgrade has been acknowledged, no details have been released, so no comparison can yet be made with the costs of the relocation to Oxpens, now updated for us by Arup (see July's **Visions**). We understand that the Department for Transport (DfT) is very interested in provision for car parking at the proposed Water Eaton Parkway station, and this may influence their decision.

We understand that the works at Oxford station are likely to be overseen by a board with representatives from the City and County, DfT and Network Rail (NR), similar to that set up for the £850 million Reading station development, which has executive responsibility. We have been promised that the board will examine the Oxpens option, though the bus companies, who would be key players in a transport hub, are not to be represented.

We had hoped that the Local Enterprise Partnership, which depends almost entirely upon volunteers, would be able to help us promote the new station/Oxpens Transport Hub project, but their

Chairman, Adrian Shooter (ex-Chiltern Railways) told us that their first priority was to create new jobs, rather than support such projects. He said that the Oxpens station would be more expensive, but did not provide any evidence to support his view.

It is not clear what effect the recent decision to annul the award of the rail franchise for the West Coast Main Line to First Group will have upon the station plans. A suggestion of a two-year delay in the Great Western franchising process may delay a decision about the new station, and it seems likely that the influence of the DfT on the outcome may be reduced.

**We have been promised that the board responsible for work at Oxford station will examine the Oxpens option.**

Looking at the wider impact of a transport hub at the Oxpens, we were surprised to find that David Lock Associates (DLA), who are working on the development of the Oxpens for the City Council, were unaware of a recent report by Steer Davies Gleave for NR that demonstrates the presence of a rail station produces significant increases in local property values. We understand that the previous aspiration for a large public space with new Council buildings has been dropped due to the lack of funding for the latter, but the Area Action Plan is still very flexible.

We were recently sympathetically received by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, Tim Stephenson, who, like



many others to whom we have been able to present our vision, was very interested in the prospect of a transport hub at Oxpens, combined with other facilities to form a landmark development in the west end. We remain hopeful that the increasing support we have received may yet enable our proposals to be properly assessed.

### Westgate – getting there?

We understand that John Lewis remains positive about the development of a new store in Oxford, but details of transport arrangements for customers and staff, parking and the pedestrianisation of city centre streets remain to be resolved.

### Frideswide Square

It appears that funds will be made available to replace the Botley Road bridge, but no details have yet been revealed. It is clear that whatever happens, the makeover of Frideswide Square will have to be reconsidered.

Transport Group: *Juliet Blackburn, Richard Bradley, Peter Headicar, Tony Joyce, Andrew Pritchard (Convenor), Graham Smith, Peter Thompson*



## Changing Oxford – tackling town traffic

**In this final part of his trilogy, Tony Joyce recounts the breakthrough – and breakdowns – of the Oxford Transport Strategy.**

On returning to Oxford in 1992 and becoming more involved in residents' and the Society's affairs, I became aware of plans taking shape which would profoundly alter the city in the future. We little realised how long these plans would take to reach fruition.

Long years of consultation and careful preparation finally resulted in 1998 in the Public Inquiry into the proposed Oxford Transport Strategy (OTS). Remembering the noise, congestion and pollution in the city centre then, it seems strange how bitter was the opposition to many of the changes we now enjoy. Business interests and college bursars among others were anxious about the reduction in on-street parking and vehicle access. Nevertheless the Inspector in his report supported the Strategy with few suggested changes and the City and County Councils resolved to adopt it. The long process of implementation began.

As with many complex projects, coordination proved difficult, giving the critics further ammunition. Road closures and parking restrictions were not immediately compensated for by better integrated bus services. The striking improvements to the High's environment only followed later after lengthy consultation. Enforcement of the traffic gates was infuriatingly delayed by Central Government procrastination. It was unfortunate that at the start of the rearrangements, Thames Water installed new water mains on many of the most congested roads, thus adding to the traffic turmoil. Empty of vehicles, Cornmarket and the west end of Broad Street had a some-

what forlorn look, reinforced by the residual clutter from their previous functions – redundant bus signs and pollution monitors, purposeless poles and bollards, inconveniently placed phone kiosks and cycle racks – I counted over 80 such obstacles in Cornmarket alone.

A new Public Realm Strategy was clearly necessary and planning then began to transform Cornmarket into a pedestrianised area fit for the heart of the city. The challenges were huge. Beneath the shabby pavement lay an uncharted network of old and haphazard services, drains and ancient cellars. Most of the shops, lacking rear access, depended on deliveries to their frontages. How could these be controlled and could cyclists be accommodated within the heavy pedestrian footfall expected? Could trees be included, as many wished?



*Cornmarket Street choked with traffic in the early 1990s*

The street we see today resulted from many, sometimes conflicting, considerations. Its essentially linear character with a fine view from the north of Tom Tower framed by the high buildings at Carfax strengthened the decision to retain the appearance of a central carriageway, narrowed by generous paving on both sides. To allow heavy delivery vehicles to pass each other, the extended pavements had to

be solidly reinforced to prevent cracking. A revised system of services with organised cable trunking was protected from vehicles' weight by the line of inset disc markers and by the newly commissioned seats, providing rest for shoppers and social foci for the young. Whatever is thought of their appearance they have certainly fulfilled three elements of their design brief: that it should be impossible to padlock a cycle to them, that any delivery vehicle would come off worse in a collision and that they should be as difficult as possible to sleep on!

Many will recall the upheaval as the restructuring was carried out section by section along the street. When completed, the granite blocks chosen for the carriageway proved unequal to the task and cracks began to appear. The County's budget for the work was severely stretched but there was no escape from replacing the surface, this time with a simpler resin-bonded grit chosen to blend with the paving and buildings. It was a relief when Cornmarket became fully operational again but the serious overspend in County finances required a special externally-chaired enquiry.

A fundamental requirement of the OTS had been the bus priority route, allowing buses free passage and so maintaining the links between the different quarters of the city. From Headington, for example, a direct bus still ran to Summertown and Kidlington. The more recent division of this route has been a loss to connectivity and has increased the walks along the 'Cornmarket gap'. I hope this link will eventually be restored at a transport junction, perhaps at the new John Lewis store or preferably at a proper transport hub at a re-sited railway station at Oxpens.



## Shaping our communications

The 'new look' we launched in July has now been rolled out across all the Society's initiatives.

In July's issue of *Visions* we launched the new website [oxcivicsoc.org.uk](http://oxcivicsoc.org.uk) which we hope users will find simpler to use with improved navigation and a search facility. Do visit it to find out more about our activities and views.

We then turned our attention to the OxClean and Oxford Streets for People initiatives. We have updated both logos



to ensure they remain up to date and make an impact. We have also developed themes for each of the initiatives which complement the Society's 'Shaping Oxford's Future' strapline and reflect our forward-looking, proactive approach:

- OxClean - 'Shaping a Cleaner City'
- Oxford Streets for People - 'Shaping Oxford's Streets'

A further priority was to reinforce the relationship between the Society and its initiatives. We have done this by adopting a consistent graphic design approach, with the use of distinctive colours to distinguish each of the strands of our work.

The same flexible web software offers us a content management system,



enabling us to update all three websites with ease and speed.

Overall, we have aimed to develop a 'look' which is professional and approachable at the same time. We are also developing our presence in social media, initially Twitter.

Both the new websites are now up and running. Do visit them - [oxclean.org.uk](http://oxclean.org.uk) and [oxstreets.org.uk](http://oxstreets.org.uk).

Do let us have any comments – we are always interested in our members' views.

## Photo gallery



*A recent OCS walk reminded us that many familiar buildings, like this one in Park End Street, owe their existence to the coming of the railways. This originally housed a furniture removals company.*



*The Queen's College, as seen on the OCS visit in September. The tour took in the new Shulman Auditorium, a state-of-the-art lecture theatre.*



# Booking form

## January – May ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **8 December**. 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 CAPITALS PLEASE

2nd member's name (if applicable).....

Address .....

.....

Postcode ..... Telephone .....

Email .....

Event	No. of tickets	Amount enclosed
<b>Visit to Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre</b> Saturday 23 February at 2pm	.....@£7	
<b>Green Ditch to Paradise Walk</b> Please delete any dates you <u>can't</u> do and indicate your preferred date/s	.....@£4	
Saturday 6 April, 2pm Sunday 14 April, 2pm Tuesday 16 April, 6pm		
<b>Visit to Pegasus Theatre</b> Saturday 20 April, 3pm	.....@£7	
<b>Visit to Nuffield Place</b> Friday 26 April NB <b>Free</b> to National Trust members Please tick if you are an NT member <input type="checkbox"/>	.....@£8	
<b>Film-lovers' Oxford, a walk</b> Please delete any dates you <u>can't</u> do and indicate your preferred date/s	.....@£4	
Sunday 12 May, 2pm Thursday 16 May, 6pm Saturday 18 May, 2pm		

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

**Send this completed form to Alan Hobbs – see right.**



## Programme calendar 'cut out and keep'

November 2012—May 2013

### \*ticketed events

*As previously announced*

**Weds 28 November 7.30 for 8pm**  
**Lord Nuffield:** Eric Sidebottom talks about how Nuffield changed Oxford

**Wednesday 16 January 7.30 for 8pm**  
**The Wildlife of the Lye Valley,** a talk by Dr Judy Webb

**Saturday 23 February\* 2pm**  
**Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre,** a visit to this St Ebbe's historic building

**Thursday 14 March 7pm**  
**Pre-AGM talk** by Prof Paul Inman and **AGM** at 8pm

**Saturday 6 April\* 2pm**  
**Sunday 14 April\* 2pm**  
**Tuesday 16 April\* 6pm**  
**Green Ditch to Paradise Walk**  
A walk with local historian, Mark Davies, from N Oxford to the Castle

**Saturday 20 April\***  
**Visit to Pegasus Theatre 3pm**

**Friday 26 April\* 10.45am**  
**Nuffield Place,** a visit to the home of car manufacturer, Lord Nuffield

**Sunday 12 May\* 2pm**  
**Thursday 16 May\* 6pm**  
**Saturday 18 May\* 2pm**

**Film-lovers' Oxford,** a walk with Alastair Lack

### \*Contact for booking/tickets only:

Alan Hobbs, 66 Southfield Road  
Oxford OX4 1PA  
01865 248 105

***If, at the last moment, you can't attend, please phone Alan Hobbs – someone will be pleased to take your place***







## Programme January – May 2013

### Open talks – all welcome

#### The Wildlife of the Lye Valley

Wednesday 16 January

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

**Dr Judy Webb**, an Oxford ecologist, will discuss the treasure trove of species still found in the Lye Valley, which has rare alkaline wetlands, including the Hogley Bog. They date back thousands of years, but future development in Headington threatens these areas of important natural heritage within the city.

*No pre-booking, members free*

*Non-members £4 on the door*

#### Oxford, the electric vehicle capital of Europe

Thursday 14 March

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Coffee/tea 6.30pm, talk 7pm, AGM 8pm

**Professor Paul Inman**, Pro-Vice Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, will discuss 'Oxford, the electric vehicle capital of Europe', an exploration of the transport challenges facing the city.

This will be followed by the AGM.

*No pre-booking, free*

### Members-only visits and walks

**Tickets needed for these events: bookings by Saturday 8 December**

*We welcome digital photos of events (preferably captioned) – please send to [newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)*

#### Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre and St Ebbe's

Saturday 23 February, 2pm: *Tickets: £7*

A visit to the Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre in Littlegate Street, St Ebbe's. This historic building has the medieval gateway of the Blackfriars and a chapel with stained glass. Local historian, **Ruth Waddle**, from the Centre, will lead a tour of the building's 'hidden history', followed by tea.

#### Green Ditch to Paradise Walk

Saturday 6 April at 2pm

Sunday 14 April at 2pm

Tuesday 16 April at 6pm

*Tickets: £4*

A 'funeral' march from the city's former execution spot to that of the county's, with locations that tell a story of fatalities and notorious murders - plus some lucky escapes! A walk with local historian **Mark Davies** from St Margaret's Road along the canal past Jericho to the Castle.

#### Pegasus Theatre

Saturday 20 April, 3pm

*Tickets: £7*

This much-loved local arts centre specialises in a range of performing arts for young people, from established to innovative works. The theatre has recently been refurbished to provide new workshops, dance and rehearsal spaces, as well as the creation of a new foyer and café open to the

public. The visit will involve a tour of the building, a brief history of Pegasus (including a film), the chance to watch a workshop and end with refreshments in the café.

#### Nuffield Place

Friday 26 April, 10.45am

*Tickets: £8*

*Free to members of the National Trust*

Following the November 2012 talk on the life of the great car manufacturer William Morris, a visit to Nuffield Place, where he lived for many years. Recently taken over by the National Trust, it provides an intimate glimpse of the private life of a public man. An introductory talk will be followed by a tour of the house. Refreshments will be available at the end (not included in the ticket price).

#### A film-lover's guide to Oxford

Sunday 12 May at 2pm

Thursday 16 May at 6pm

Saturday 18 May at 2pm

*Tickets: £4*

From Charley's Aunt to Inspector Lewis, Oxford has proved a magnet for filmmakers and filmgoers alike. Whether it's a Bollywood spectacular or Harry Potter, the streets and quadrangles are a familiar background to numerous films. In this walk, with **Alastair Lack**, explore the city that has provided the setting for films as diverse as *A Yank at Oxford* and *The Golden Compass* and hear about film Oxonians such as Emma Watson.

## More awards for the Society ...



We were delighted to collect two awards at the recent AGM of Civic Voice, the umbrella group for civic societies. The first was a Civic Day award for our June 2012 workshop on Neighbourhood Planning, which we reported on in the last issue of *Visions*. We also won a Highly Commended award from the Marsh Christian Trust for our contribution to the civic movement. The photo shows (left) Vernon Porter with Gryff Rhys Jones (the President of Civic Voice), Steve Graham (Director) and Paula Ridley (Chair) on the far right.

## ... and for Rosanne Bostock

For six years Rosanne inspired our OxClean initiative and is still involved in the School's Anti-Litter Campaign. Now she has been awarded the Midcounties Co-operative 'Member of the Year' Award as an 'unsung heroine' of the community. Rosanne was recently honoured by Oxford's Lord Mayor for her campaign work.



## Annual General Meeting

This will be held on **Thursday 14 March 2013**. As our Chair said on page 3, we would be delighted to welcome **new members** to the Executive Committee. If you are interested please contact Vernon Porter for an informal discussion. Formal nominations should have the consent of the nominee and require seconding. Nominations for Officer positions and membership of the Executive Committee and notice of any business to be put on the agenda should be sent by Wednesday 27 February to: Vernon Porter, Hon Secretary, Oxford Civic Society, 67 Cunliffe Close, Oxford, OX2 7BJ, e-mail [info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk](mailto:info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk)

The Annual Review and provisional agenda will be published in the March edition of *Visions*. The final agenda will be available from the Hon Secretary after 27 February and at the meeting.

## Contact us/Who's who

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**Vice-President:** *Tony Joyce*

**Chairman:** *Peter Thompson*

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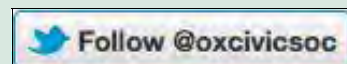
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