

VISIONS

No 124, March 2013

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*Photo: The controversial flats in
Roger Dudman Way – see page 8*



Planning our future

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

AGM

Thursday 14 March 2013

All welcome at our AGM
Magdalen College Auditorium,
Longwall Street

6.30pm Refreshments

**7pm Talk by Professor Paul Inman
on *Oxford, the electric vehicle
capital of Europe***

8pm AGM

See page 7 for the agenda and the
enclosed *Annual Review 2012*

Planning issues have never been as newsworthy as they are now and this issue of *Visions* has much to say on them. Are we seeing a new mood of cooperation on planning matters between some of the authorities concerned?

We seem to be at something of a crossroads in time: after five years of financial 'crisis' and a triple-dip recession looming, is this the new norm, or will we find the magic growth button? Can and should Oxford play a bigger part in finding it? If it is to do so, it seems clear that it must develop in a coherent and coordinated fashion, hand-in-hand with the surrounding

towns and villages, and with transport facilities integral to those development plans. We aired some of the issues for the development of Oxford and its region in a seminar we organised on 17 January, and which is reported on pages 4-5. Coordinated implementation of seamless development policies across the local region, together with a consistent transport policy, seems an imperative.

A possible light in this particular tunnel just may be the submission to central Government of a bid by Oxford City Council, in collaboration with all the surrounding local planning authorities and several other organisations, under the newly-created 'City Deals' scheme. The objective is access to substantial additional funding for coordinated



Amersfoort station, in the Netherlands, is integrated with the town's bus station and has generous parking for bicycles

projects aimed at facilitating business potential. Could this be the dawn of a new era of cooperation? Or is it a conspiracy to subvert planning controls and erode democracy, as some have suggested? We now know that the bid has passed the first stage (along with 19 bids from other city regions) and that the details will be worked out over the next nine months. We do hope that the spirit of cooperation which enabled the bid to be made will thrive through this next stage, so we can look forward to the genuine joined-up thinking in regional planning that is essential if Oxford is to keep up with its peers elsewhere in the country, in mainland Europe, and the rest of the world.

Other Government proposals relating to planning matters are referred to on page 6.

All change at the station

The other 'deal' emanating shortly from Government is the 'Green Deal', promoted by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, by which it is hoped to stimulate and make affordable the adaptation of all 22 million homes in the country, so as to cease domestic greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

This is the 'elephant in the room' with which we are all going to have to contend. Part of the plans to achieve CO₂ reduction targets is the dramatic improvement of the national rail network. Here, again Oxford stands at something of a literal, as well as a figurative cross-roads.

Literally, Network Rail is now confident of funding for the massive developments outlined in our last edition, and

gave some details at a presentation on 9 January. Oxford stands on the proposed 'electric spine' and at the intersection of the north-south and new, or re-established, east-west routes.

Figuratively, we seem poised either to make a dramatic step forward towards a properly-integrated public transport system for the city, or to simply plod on with our disjointed and disconnected bus and railway systems.

In any event, it now seems certain that, at long last, the infamous Botley Road bridge will be comprehensively reconstructed but probably at the expense of disruption to traffic such as has never before been seen in the city!

A new masterplan (to augment that previously commissioned by the City Council for the area south of Frideswide Square) is to be prepared for the City and County Councils, jointly in association with Network Rail, for the existing station area – is this more evidence for a new mood of cooperation? A design competition for the new station itself is also to be held – will we get a gateway to the city worthy of it?

Whatever the location of Oxford's station, the real point is that the opportunity to integrate the city's transport systems must be seized.

It seems perverse to us that two separate masterplans are to be prepared. They meet at probably the most critical position in the whole area – Frideswide Square – without overlapping. Network Rail's costings for the vital rail improvements were somewhat vague. However, simple analysis of the information available and the figures provided by Arup last year appear to give the lie to the argument that constructing a new station at a new site closer to Oxpens would be significantly more expensive. Indeed it may be cheaper, as well as offering better scope for a proper transport interchange and more commercial development. We continue to press the case for consideration of this option, but whatever the location, the real point is that the opportunity to integrate the city's transport systems must be seized.

Room for more

Oxford never ceases to be a place of interest, debate and controversy; we engage with such issues all the time, through our Planning, Transport and Programme Groups and our promotion of Streets for People, community development, OxClean and Oxfordshire Blue Plaques. We always welcome new participants in any of these activities, at whatever level of commitment – do please contact us via any of the addresses provided on page 12 if you would like to be involved!

David Townsend and Chris Rayson

It is with great sadness that we report the deaths of two long-standing colleagues, David Townsend and Chris Rayson. A tribute to David is given on page 3.

Chris Rayson was the architect member of the Planning Group. Chris had followed in his father Thomas' footsteps as a distinguished local architect, particularly skilled in restoration. Members may have seen his work on the vestry screens and Bosworth monument in St Giles Church or the Peace Plaque in Bonn Square. When not advising on the maintenance of Blenheim Palace, he thoroughly enjoyed the fortnightly sessions of the Planning Group, to which he brought a wealth of practical experience and creative appreciation. His shrewd and informed comments on major developments during pre-application consultations with planners and architects were always helpful and constructive. We shall greatly miss his cheerful and knowledgeable contributions and the pleasure of his company.

*Peter Thompson
Chairman*



David Townsend – a tribute



Members who have appreciated David Townsend's regular transport notes contributed to this newsletter for nearly 20 years will be saddened by his recent death.

David was one of the longest serving members of the Society's Executive Committee, having first joined the Planning Group in 1993. Growing up as a keen cyclist in Oxford, he had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the city's geography and character. His experience working in the motor industry here, and as a Labour City Councillor, gave him an unrivalled expertise in transport and planning matters,

which he deployed unstintingly for the benefit of the Society and the wider city.

A penetrating analytical approach, always expressed with courtesy and reasonableness, made him a valued consultee, widely respected among County planners and bus company operators alike. He was a very gifted and delightful colleague and we shall all miss him greatly.

Shortly before being admitted to hospital, David penned his reminiscences of his time with the Society, which we print below in full.

It all began with a chance encounter with Sheila Glazebrook outside the Radcliffe Infirmary in 1992 or 1993. She happened to mention that the Society's Planning Group needed a new member. So on a subsequent Monday morning I found myself in the City Council Planning Department, then on the top floor of the Clarendon Centre, with Vic Berry and Sylvia Kempshall, the start of nearly 20 years of happily pouring over plans which ranged from the artistic to the appalling.

Eventually Vic and Sylvia retired and leadership was assumed by Kate Miller, as she then was (Kate Joyce). Chris Rayson, Mark Barrington-Ward, Gillian Argyle and others joined. Now it is all on computers and I am well out of it!

Somehow I got the reputation for 'knowing about buses' and started writing transport notes for the newsletter. When the City Council was responsible for traffic matters I used to get all the consultation papers but this ceased when the County Council assumed control.

I suppose the high point of my career was to represent the Society at the Public Inquiry into the Oxford Transport Strategy in 1998. As is usual at these things, a multitude of objectors was ranged against three supporters of OTS

– Keith Moffat, then as Oxford Bus Company, also speaking for Stagecoach, Moyra Haynes of the Oxford Preservation Trust and me. Luckily the Inspector was not easily bamboozled by the weight of objections and produced an excellent report broadly in favour of the City's proposals.

I think most people are happy with the result, even though the County Council has made some modifications, mainly involving the removal of bus stops from Queens Street. The more radical proposals to 'transform Oxford' have, so far, failed to materialise. In more recent times, the focus of the Society's transport policy has fallen on the railway station. As I am a lone voice against moving the station to Oxpens, I will say no more!!

I have enjoyed my time on the Executive and will miss it, but all things come to an end.

I wish the Society every success in their future desire to improve Oxford and look forward to seeing results.

David Townsend

Traffic and parked cars clogging the High Street (date unknown) before the introduction of the Oxford Transport Strategy





Our city's future ...

What kind of city do we want Oxford to be in the future? Do we want it to grow and change or to resist both? Can we sustain growth in our congested area without compromising the very qualities that make Oxford so special? Seventy people attended our *Oxford Futures* seminar, held in the Town Hall on 17 January, to open up the debate. Nicholas Falk from URBED reports.

Introducing the theme, our Chairman **Peter Thompson** stressed the vital importance of thinking about the future, given the need to respond to the challenges – a changing economy, housing shortages, climate change and energy security among them. Crucially we need to **work together** to solve the issues.

A strong local economy but ...

Dave Valler, an economist from Oxford Brookes University, drew conclusions from his work for the City and County on Oxford's economic position. While the local economy has been growing, it is only at the national average and has been outstripped by Berkshire and Cambridge on factors such as income per head and inward investment. Oxford has great strengths in health and education but it may be vulnerable from so many jobs being in the public sector, and incomes are low in relation to house prices. Hence it is vital to realise the full potential of the 'knowledge economy', not least by acknowledging the need to link economic 'clusters' by addressing transport issues. The fundamental question 'should Oxford grow?' needs to be asked, not avoided.

The City's strategy

David Edwards, Executive Director at Oxford City Council, explained the City's strategy for planned economic growth. Oxford is in competition with other cities and has severe problems with its infrastructure. Hence it is important to plan where future jobs and homes will go, and how people are going to travel between them. At present many workers live outside the city, yet many commute

to the city edges not the centre, making it a challenge to offer public transport.

He explained why the bid to government under the City Deals involved growing a 'knowledge spine', connecting up a number of sites. He also acknowledged the need to improve the public realm and referred to the new opportunities at Oxford Station, Oxpens and the Westgate development. The new rail link to London via Bicester and the electrification of the current line will bring immense opportunities. While hundreds of new homes are planned for Barton, there are still real problems in making housing affordable for would-be residents.

Lessons from Europe

Nicholas Falk from URBED, one of the promoters of the seminar, used examples from comparable cities to show how growth and infrastructure can be joined together to produce smarter results. He cited Cambridge where the £150 million investment in fast busways was starting to pay off with plans for some 20,000 homes along the route.

Those who had gone from Oxford to learn from new Dutch settlements were impressed by how easy it was to get around on foot or bike, and how cars took second place. Fast growing historic cities like Freiburg, Montpellier



and Copenhagen have kept car use down by using carefully planned urban extensions to boost their appeals as places to live and visit, and make modern rapid transit pay for itself. Success depended on agreeing a spatial and investment plan for the wider travel to work area, ensuring new development and infrastructure were joined up, and having an agency or joint ventures that could provide the necessary continuity, and hence confidence that private investors look for. (Read about URBED at www.urbed.coop)

A strategy for transport

Peter Headicar, transport specialist at Oxford Brookes University and member of our Transport Group, warned that over-reliance on growth in peripheral towns such as Bicester was simply adding to the problems of journeys to work, as many people feel that cars are the only viable option. He showed how a 'step change' could be achieved through seven measures – enhancing local rail services, some form of rapid transit, better interchange hubs, shuttle links, integrated travel information and ticketing systems, workplace travel plans, and changes in the funding arrangements, including 'congestion' charging in the city.

In Peter's view, the details were less important than having an agreed strategy for transport, which might take up some of the technological breakthroughs that are being made in Oxford, such as electric bikes.

Tackling climate change

Peter Thompson addressed the vital need to cut carbon emissions and switch to renewable sources of energy. New development could help Oxford play a role in showing the way forward. He recommended David MacKay's book *Sustainable energy* (freely available at www.withouthotair.com), which explains the urgency of adopting a range of actions, including green power, to meet our future energy needs.

Wendy Twist from the Oxford Low Carbon Hub showed how women were taking the lead in different parts of





... what do we want it to be? The BIG debate



Oxfordshire, responding to visible threats like flooding. Over 60 active groups have undertaken projects such as the largest solar panel arrays on schools and encouraged communities to take advantage of the Green Deal scheme for upgrading poorly insulated homes. Experience in Wallingford suggested annual household savings of £250 and Barton residents have shown interest in the scheme. A grant of £1.2 million will help communities develop schemes to the point where they are 'investment ready'.

Tapping into community or social enterprises offered a practical way of changing behaviour, and ultimately attitudes. And many of these grassroots projects help in building social capital.

Read more about the Hub at www.lowcarbonhub.org

Developing local communities

Van Coulter, Councillor for Barton and a member of Oxford City's Cabinet, highlighted the contrasts between those living in Barton and in the city as a whole, particularly in educational attainment, income levels and home ownership. With the population there likely to increase by a third, it was vital to engage local people and ensure their voices are heard. Bodies like the Low Car-

bon Hub had a major role to play in tackling fuel poverty.

Vice President **Tony Joyce** said that the nation may be looking to Oxford to boost prosperity, but the city needs the resources to do this properly so that those who work in the knowledge economy can reach their jobs without depending on cars.

He cited three very successful communities – Wolvercote, Jericho and Headington – which while very different in history and physical character, shared a strong sense of identity and community. He thought that the wide social mix and role played by primary schools and local clubs and associations were key to this success. The challenge is to replicate the success of these communities elsewhere.

The need for vision

Summing up, **John Glasson**, Emeritus Professor at Oxford Brookes, said the City now needs to aim higher with a clear vision of what it aspires to. We must consider how to develop planning policies that can integrate housing, transport and economic development. Green Belt policies need serious re-consideration. New stations create new opportunities for housing and employment. We could push for Oxford to become a 'solar city' where we're known for renewable energy.

But a key issue is how we align our institutions – only if we speak with one, powerful voice will we get the ear of government. He cited how Cambridge



Futures had become a forum for the discussion of ideas, while 'Cambridge2You' is now successfully using promotional techniques from Silicon Valley.

The debate starts here ...

A member of the audience questioned whether growth was the right goal and whether it would deliver a better quality of life. Our speakers all noted that change is unpredictable but inevitable and that it must be managed effectively to ensure the prosperity on which all our futures depend.

We're planning future events to take this debate forward so please watch this space. In the meantime you can see all the presentations at www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Photos courtesy of Graham P Smith





Planning – the big picture

As Peter Thompson and Richard Bradley report, planning issues at national and local level are creating both controversy and opportunities.

Shape your own community

The Localism Act of 2011 gives communities the power to shape the place in which they live or work by creating a **Neighbourhood Plan** (NP). Through an NP, communities can set a vision for their area and create planning policies which have the force of law, subject to certain provisos. The task of creating an NP falls to a Neighbourhood Forum (NF), which is essentially a self-selecting group of at least 21 local people.

Four communities across Oxford are currently setting up an NF with a view to creating a plan – **Wolvercote, Summertown/St Margaret's, Jericho and Headington**. The first three of these are now asking the City Council for formal recognition. Boundaries have been drafted, which the City Council will shortly consult on. The Headington group will shortly seek public endorsement of its proposed boundary and NF after which it too will ask the City Council for formal recognition.

Undoubtedly the driving force for each of these groups is a concern about future developments. The challenge for these groups will be to address concerns within the limitations of the Act.

For more information, including the status of local plans, see [our website](#).

Relaxing owners' rights?

As Clive Booth forecast in our last issue, the Government has published for consultation a set of proposals for the relaxation of the so-called **Permitted Development Rights**. These specify quite precisely what building works a property owner can carry out without having to seek planning consent, and the proposed relaxation greatly extends what is allowed. We submitted a detailed response to the consultation, since we believed the proposals were ill-considered and the case for them unsubstantiated. We still

await the outcome, but meanwhile the relevant House of Commons Select Committee concluded, in its response, that the Government had failed to assess the social and environmental effects of the proposals, as well as failing to provide credible evidence of the beneficial economic effects which it alleges justify them. We very much hope that the Government proposals will be dropped.

A plan for new housing

The City Council has been developing the **Sites and Housing Development Plan** document for over two years, and after a series of consultations and a public examination, it is now due to be adopted (subject to the full Council vote) at the end of February. It sets out detailed policies relating to types and design of housing developments across the city, as well as the type of development considered appropriate for 65 identified sites. Some aspects of this have proved controversial, as is probably inevitable given the conflicting interests of different groups in our city.

Assessing our heritage

When the current Core Strategy (which established the framework for development) was examined in 2010, one of the comments was the absence of an adequate assessment of the city's unique heritage. Since then, the City Council has embarked upon a number of initiatives to address this criticism. This includes the preparation of a **Heritage Asset Register** which should eventually cover the whole city. It will be developed as part of an exercise carried out by local communities in making character assessments of their neighbourhoods. Anyone interested in participating in this should contact the Conservation Officer.

The Council has published its own **Historic Urban Area Character Assessment** which considers in considerable detail the elements which make up the character of the ancient core of the city. We participated in the consultation on this document in December and await the next stage in the formal adoption of the document.

Action at Barton

The City Council's proposals for new housing to the west of Barton constitute the largest such project undertaken for some years. The **Area Action Plan** was adopted by the Council before Christmas and sets out the development policies. The wording relating to connecting the new community to the rest of the city was watered down considerably as a result of opposition from the County Council as the highway authority. It remains to be seen how these connections can be accomplished or how the adverse environmental effects of the existing A40 can be mitigated. On these and other design issues, the Council appears to be trying hard to engage with the local community and develop acceptable compromise solutions which bridge the many difficult constraints on this site.

Major development proposals

Recently we have seen exhibitions of some major development proposals. These include the **Science Oxford 'Magnet'** building on the site of Macclesfield House, the new **Blavatnik School of Government** and the **Exeter College** 'second campus' on the site of Ruskin College, both on Walton Street, and the more modest proposal by **St Cross College**, on Pusey Street. All these projects involve high-profile international architects and some fairly uncompromisingly-modern architecture. While we have voiced our own criticism of some of these proposals, the presentations we have received have provided fascinating insights into the circumstances driving the developments and their proposed design solutions.

Meanwhile, in Headington the planning for the **University's campus in Old Road** crystallises the difficulties in accommodating what is projected to be a world-class medical research facility adjacent to the hospital and existing residential areas. Nowhere more than here are the difficulties in dealing with transport issues more apparent, and the need for joined-up thinking between the local authorities more obvious.



Annual General Meeting – Thursday 14 March 2013

Please join us for the pre-AGM talk at 7pm and the AGM at 8pm

The 44th Annual General Meeting of the Society will take place in the
Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street.

The pre-AGM talk *Oxford, the electric vehicle capital of Europe* will be given by Professor Paul Inman,
Pro-Vice Chancellor of Oxford Brookes University.

Refreshments will be available from 6.30pm

Agenda

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 President's opening remarks | 6 Treasurer's report and accounts for 2012 |
| 2 Apologies for absence | 7 Reports from Working Groups |
| 3 Minutes of the 2012 AGM | 8 Election of Officers for 2013-14 |
| 4 Matters arising from the minutes | 9 Election of Committee Members for 2013-14 |
| 5 Chairman's report | 10 Any other business which has been notified |

[Visit our website](#) to see the minutes of the 2012 AGM and the full accounts for 2012. Some printed copies of these will be made available at the AGM. The *Annual Review* circulated with this newsletter constitutes our report to members.

Please bring this agenda and the review with you.

Vernon Porter, Honorary Secretary, info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

In brief

Vision the Isis 2020 is a blog imagining a walk along the Isis between Folly Bridge and Iffley Lock in 2020. Written by Paul Jepson, who lives in Iffley Fields, it imagines a range of developments that happened as a result of community mobilisation for change. The purpose of the blog is to "prompt wider discussion on the value and future of the riverside lands". Readers are invited to comment or add their alternative visions for this stretch of river.

Dr Jepson says, "My piece is also an experiment in thinking about how collective future visions might emerge or be promoted. It seems that we are good at objecting to developments but less good at collectively imagining futures that we'd like to make happen".

This is certainly an engaging way to envisage a future and we'll be watching

the outcome with interest. See visiontheisis2020.wordpress.com

Bookshelf

Mark Davies, who leads many of our walks, has recently published a revised edition of ***A Towpath Walk in Oxford***.

This edition includes new, updated or previously unpublished material on the development of Jericho, the on-going community effort to retain its boatyard, the safeguarding of the Trap Grounds Nature Reserve and much more about the river and canal between Wolvercote and the city.

The book has two maps and many illustrations. Published by Oxford Towpath Press, it costs £6 and is available from local bookshops or online: www.oxfordwaterwalks.co.uk



Planning comments – making room for more

The last four months have shown no diminution in the number of planning applications coming forward for scrutiny by the Planning Team. Many relate to the problem of how Oxford can intensify its housing stock to increase the population which can live within the Green Belt without doing serious harm to the pleasant character of the city.

Some applications increase living space within existing plots of generous size. For example, at **41 Blandford Avenue** permission has been given to demolish the existing family house with four bedrooms and a large garden, and to replace it with two detached 5-bed houses. Another example is **385 Woodstock Road**, on the busy corner of the junction with **First Turn**, where the application is again to demolish and replace, in this case by a pair of 5-bed semi-detached houses which appear rather too crammed on the site.

At **13 and 13A Blenheim Drive**, (a house divided horizontally into two flats), permission has been granted, despite much local criticism, to demolish and replace it by a semi-detached pair of large 5-bed houses. At **109 Lime Walk**, a succession of proposals has now produced plans to demolish the down-at-heel small house, which had already been extended and sub-divided in the past, and replace it with two semi-detached houses of greater capacity on the site: much, we hope, in the style of the original.

New building in all such cases has to be to modern standards of sustainability, which contributes to the reduction in the city's carbon footprint. But this type of replacement infilling needs to be done with care, with designs sensitive to local character, and regard for the problems of parking, overbearing and the provision of adequate cycle and bin storage, which intensification brings.

While there is clearly a need for family houses of all sizes, the demand for additions to large houses to create even more extensive accommodation also remains buoyant, as illustrated at the

recently permitted **371 Woodstock Road** and **72 Hill Top Road**. Application has been made at the Grade 2 Listed **7, Norham Gardens** to convert this educational establishment back into a single dwelling house with further additions and embellishments.

At the other end of the market, many applications continue for small additions to houses, as owners seek to expand their living space without the hassle and expense of moving to a larger property. The city's new policies for the registration of Houses in Multiple Occupation are producing numerous applications for the certification of an approved change of use, some of which are now being refused under the recently adopted saturation policies.

Will CIL put the brakes on?

Last year the Government introduced the principle of raising funds for infrastructure provision or improvement by means of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This would be applied to all developments of 100m² or more floor area and developments of any size if they resulted in the provision of one or more new dwellings (with certain exemptions). The City Council's consultation on the proposed scale of charges ends on 1 March, but, if adopted, CIL would be payable on all new houses, for example, at a rate of £100 per m² of floor area. After April, subdividing a single existing house to create two small flats, of, say, 50m² would thus attract an additional charge of £5,000 when planning consent is granted. It will be interesting to see what effect this has on the number of applications of this type which we review every fortnight.

Roger Dudman Way flats

The city seems to have been taken by surprise by the development of these student flats by the University. The construction emerged during the autumn last year and soon revealed



Roger Dudman Way flats seen from the river where they obscure views towards the city and dominate Port Meadow

Photo courtesy of Adrian Arbib and Protect Port Meadow from Oxford University

itself not only to be singularly ugly in design, but to be horrifically obtrusive in views towards the city from most of **Port Meadow**.

While there is obvious merit in making good use of what was a derelict piece of ex-railway land, it seems that the true visibility of the new blocks, and their effect in obscuring some of the characteristic old skyline of the city, was very badly mis-judged.

At the time of writing, a substantial campaign is being fought, of which the Society is supportive, to persuade the University to voluntarily dismantle the top two floors of the buildings, or for the City Council to revoke the planning consent.

The matter was discussed at the West Area Planning Committee of the City Council on 7 February, when members expressed their dismay at the current state of the development. They resolved to consult with the University and take additional advice on what could be done to mitigate the impact. Following this, further action would be considered. It was also decided to set up a Review Body to consider how more detailed consultation and examination of major applications of this type should be arranged to avoid such occurrences in future.

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



Transport – time for a rethink

We are continuing to focus mainly on the location and nature of a better transport hub at an enlarged railway station. Strong consensus is emerging that better infrastructure is crucial to Oxford's future

Members of the Group attended a **Network Rail** presentation, hoping to learn about NR's plans for the station. Although the principle of a transport interchange appears to have been accepted, no proposed layouts were shown: just a schematic showing another through track to the west of platform 2, which becomes an island platform, and a bay to the north of platform 1. NR did say that they were looking at extending this south across the Botley Road, to give a fourth through platform. We believe that this solution is inferior, and probably more expensive, than creating a new transport hub at the Oxpens.

The welcome news of improvements to the **Botley Road bridge** was announced, but without details, or any indication of how disruption to traffic will be avoided. Substantial redesign of Frideswide Square is likely.

The separate issue of access to the **Trap Grounds** was raised by many. NR's responses seemed rather insensitive to users' needs, proposing a bridge incorporating steps rather than a smooth gradient, as well as to concerns about noise and vibration from East-West Rail trains in Wolvercote.

OCS Oxford Futures seminar

Most of the speakers at our January seminar (see pages 4-5) highlighted the urgent need for **better transport** for Oxford and the central Oxfordshire region, if it is to maintain its international competitiveness as a national and international centre for scientific and technological development and

production. Peter Headicar, a member of the Transport Group, put forward a possible network of connected transport links for central Oxfordshire.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of **rapid transit systems** such as tramways to the success of many of Oxford's competitor cities, as well as good provision for **cycling** and other low-carbon means of transport. Their stations were often hubs of commercial activity, as well as destinations in their own right.

We will be continuing our dialogues with stakeholders to try to ensure that Oxford and its region get the transport links and the stations they deserve.

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

Shape up for summer!

Not just a spring clean

By the time this newsletter arrives, **OxClean Spring Clean** will be over. Many thanks to all of you who took part – we are delighted to have had such excellent support for the sixth year running.

Keeping Oxford spruced up is not just a spring activity. **We encourage and can support clean-ups at any time of year**, by lending litterpickers and high-vis vests and providing guidance.

So if your group (or you and your neighbours) want to tackle a grot spot, please contact info@oxclean.org.uk. You may be surprised what good fun a litter-pick can be.

Plan now for the party season

Now is also the time to start thinking about **street parties**. Some streets opt for June/July parties, others prefer September. You don't need a national event to celebrate, or a huge team to organise a party, just a few neighbours with a little time to spare. You can get advice and ideas from our Streets for People website www.oxstreets.org.uk/index.php/street-parties or phone Richard Bradley on 01865 762 418.



Booking form

May – September ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **12 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 CAPITALS PLEASE

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

Address

Postcode Telephone

Email

Event	No. of tickets	Amount enclosed
For events on more than one date, please delete any dates you <u>can't</u> do and indicate your preferred date/s		
Gloucester Green, St Giles' and the Beaumonts, a walk Thursday 30 May, 6pm Sunday 2 June, 10am@£4	
Oxford sculpture, a cycle ride Sunday 30 June, 2pm Saturday 13 July, 2pm@£5	
Bartlemas Chapel visit Tuesday 2 July, 2pm@£4	
Harris Manchester College visit Tuesday 9 July, 2pm@£7	
Wytham Woods visit Wednesday 10 July, 7pm Wednesday 17 July, 7pm@£7	
Greys Court visit (free to National Trust members) Thursday 19 September, 10am Saturday 21 September, 10am@£7	

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'

March – September 2013

*ticketed events

Thurs 14 March 6.30 for 7pm
AGM and talk by Professor Paul Inman on electric vehicles and Oxford

Tuesday 30 April 7.30 for 8pm
Turbulent times at Cowley, a talk by David Buckle

Thursday 30 May* 6pm
Sunday 2 June* 10am
Gloucester Green, St Giles' and the Beaumonts, a walk with Malcolm Graham

Thursday 6 June 7.30 for 8pm
Radcliffe Observatory Quarter, a talk by Niall McLaughlin

Sunday 30 June* 2pm
Saturday 13 July* 2pm
Oxford sculpture, a cycle ride

Tuesday 2 July* 2pm
Visit to Bartlemas Chapel

Tuesday 9 July* 2pm
Visit to Harris Manchester College

Wednesday 10 July* 7pm
Wednesday 17 July* 7pm
Visit to Wytham Woods

Thursday 19 September* 10am
Saturday 21 September* 10am
Visit to Greys Court, with Sir Hugo Brunner

*Contact for booking/tickets only:

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





Programme April – September 2013

Open talks – all welcome

Turbulent times at Cowley

Tuesday 30 April

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

David Buckle was a production-line worker and a shop steward involved in local and national negotiations at Cowley. He recounts events affecting the car industry during the second half of the 20th century, covering the good times as well as the political and industrial issues which the Cowley works experienced.

Free to members, £4 for non members

The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter

Thursday 6 June

The Bastion, Jesus College, Ship Street

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

Niall McLaughlin, the architect co-ordinating the ROQ Masterplan for Oxford University, will discuss the long and interesting history of the site. The current building project is the most important architectural development in the university for 100 years and Niall McLoughlin will report on how the plan is developing from the drawing board to reality.

Free to members, £4 for non-members

Members-only visits and walks

Tickets needed for these events: bookings by Friday 12 April

Gloucester Green, St Giles' and the Beaumonts

Thursday 30 May, 6pm

Sunday 2 June, 10am

Tickets: £4

Local historian **Malcolm Graham** will lead two further walks (first offered in 2012) to one of the most historic areas of the centre of Oxford. Priority will be given to those who were previously disappointed.

An Oxford sculpture bicycle ride

Sunday 30 June, 2pm

Saturday 13 July, 2pm

Tickets: £5

Oxford and its university has a wealth of important and interesting sculpture from many centuries. From depictions of Nicholas and Dorothy Wadham in Wadham's front quad to the art of Barbara Hepworth in St Catherine's, Oxford residents can enjoy a wide range of fine sculpture. **Peter Thompson**, our Chairman, together with **Alastair Lack**, will lead two bicycle rides – a 'first' for the Society. The ride will end with tea and scones or cake at The Vaults (included in the ticket price). **Maximum 15 people per ride.**

Bartlemas Chapel

Tuesday 2 July, 2pm

Tickets: £4

A further chance to see the medieval Chapel, former leper hospital and chaplain's house, off the Cowley Road, following the popular visit in 2012. Priority will be given to those previously disappointed. **NB It is not possible to visit by car.**

Harris Manchester College

Tuesday 9 July, 2pm

Tickets: £7

Harris Manchester College, in Mansfield Road, is the college for mature students. Closely linked in the past with the Unitarian movement, it has impressive Victorian buildings and a fine library. Above all, it has what the architectural historian Nicholas Pevsner called 'a hidden gem in Oxford' – the stained glass windows in the chapel by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. The visit will start with a short history of the college, followed by visits to the chapel and the library, and end with tea and biscuits in the hall.

Wytham Woods

Wednesday 10 July, 7pm

Wednesday 17 July, 7pm

Tickets: £7

Wytham Woods are one of the most studied areas of woodland in the world. Almost 1,000 research papers are based on work undertaken within this 1,000 acre woodland. Curator **Nigel Fisher** will lead a walk that will cover the history, ecology and research projects of Wytham.

Greys Court (maximum 25 per tour)

Thursday 19 September, 10am

Tickets: £7

Saturday 21 September, 10am (free to members of NT)

This National Trust house near Henley was where Sir Hugo Brunner, our President, grew up. He has kindly agreed to lead two tours round his childhood home and will provide a fascinating glimpse into growing up in an English stately home. The restaurant will be open for refreshments at the end of the tour (not included in the ticket price).

Blue Plaques in 2012

Eda Forbes, secretary to the Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board, reports on the year's events.

Dr Kate Tiller stood down as Chairman in October. We are most grateful for her dedication and valuable contribution over four years. Robert Evans, Regius Professor of History Emeritus, succeeds her.

We commemorated the best-selling novelist **Mrs Humphry Ward (1851-1920)**, born into the Arnold dynasty, who lived at 17 Bradmore Road for the first decade of her married life. She was instrumental in founding Somerville and later the Mary Ward Centre in London which continues to provide vital cultural and practical resources for the poor.

H H Asquith (1852-1928), radical Prime Minister (1908-1916), was the last to head a purely Liberal administration. The plaque was unveiled at his country residence, The Wharf, Sutton Courtenay, by his great-grandson, the 3rd Earl of Oxford and Asquith. The presence of Helena Bonham-Carter (Asquith's great-granddaughter) and Tim Burton caused a frisson of excitement.

Kenneth Grahame (1859-1932) was honoured at Boham's House, Blewbury, where he lived 1910-1920. The Bodleian, to which he left his royalties, was delighted to fund this plaque. **Reginald Tiddy (1880-1916)**, a Trinity don with a passionate interest in folk culture, known for his seminal collection of mummers' plays, was commemorated at the village hall, known as Tiddy Hall, in Ascott-under-Wychwood. He gave the original hall in 1912 as a reading room and WEA venue. He was killed on the Somme.

We did our bit for Olympic fever with a plaque unveiled by Sir Roger Bannister at 17 Maidcroft Road, Cowley, for **Maureen Gardner (1928-1974)**, Olympic Hurdles Silver Medallist 1948.

The photo shows the plaque for **Ronnie Barker (1929-2005)** at 23 Church Cowley Road where he grew up 1935-1949. The Lord Mayor performed the unveiling, joined by Mike Chew, Chairman of the Old Boys' Association of the former City of Oxford High School which Ronnie attended.



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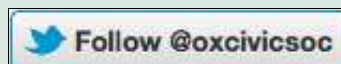
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