

VISIONS

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*The Westgate development – see p2.
Photo courtesy of the Westgate Alliance
(Land Securities and The Crown Estate)*



The case for joined-up planning

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

Oxford seems a hotbed of activity – even more than usual. But is there any coherence in what is planned?

A plethora of important individual projects is now coming forward to add to the complexity of planning whole swathes of the city and county. The need for coherent and consistent policies across the region, and for proper recognition of the inextricable link between development and transport, are just two of the issues which have emerged from the 'Oxford Futures' seminars in which we have been involved (see page 3 for a report of the June event). What is also clear is that the kind of high-value

science-based businesses which are growing out of the research institutions in and around Oxford are increasingly being looked to as the drivers of the 'new economy'. The planning and transport policy decisions which can blight or boost these businesses are thus of national importance, as well as dictating just how our city and county will look in years to come. New initiatives, such as the Government's City Deals invitation may launch a new era of coherent city-regional planning; let's hope so.

At a more local level, the four groups involved in preparing Neighbourhood Plans in Oxford are beginning to tackle

the intricacies of policy development, while the three-year relaxation of the requirement to obtain planning consent recently instituted by Government causes us huge concern because of the potential spoliation of our suburbs through uncontrolled extensions.

Westgate on Thames?

Although Oxford has a thriving retail centre, the current **Westgate shopping centre** is an unloved 1970s legacy, and there is a perception that Oxford loses out to Reading and Milton Keynes and is not where 'the quality' spends its money.

Our view is that rather than compete on size or glitz, Oxford should be improved

by creation of a truly high-quality environment. Shopping is clearly not just about material acquisition but is a social experience in which the surroundings play a crucial part. We believe that generating footfall to ensure commercial vitality is as much about the 'feel' of the surroundings as it is about filling floorspace with household names.

The redevelopment of Westgate is an opportunity to create a new experience, genuinely unique to Oxford, linking the existing historic streets and the commercial centre to attractions like the Castle, while making the most of the areas currently sacrificed to car parking. To do this, it is essential that it looks out as well as in, and, in particular, helps to connect the Oxpens riverside to the city centre.

Oxpens – an opportunity

Coincidentally, the City Council simultaneously opened consultation on the draft masterplan for the Oxpens area. It is encouraging that serious thought now seems to be given to the revitalising of this long-neglected area (though see Clive Booth's comments on page 5). With its riverside frontage and close proximity to the city centre and public transport, with sensitive design this area could be a real showcase for contemporary urban design.

We have long been campaigning for reconsideration of old plans for relocating the **railway station** south of Botley Road, since this appears to offer the best chance of creating a properly-functioning transport interchange. It would also seem to be consistent with the City Council's objectives for the Oxpens area, and would enhance the attractiveness of the Westgate development, and the John Lewis store in particular. However, Network Rail and the City Council continue to play their cards close to their chests regarding station replacement proposals.

And elsewhere ...

Science Oxford recently submitted proposals for '**The Magnet**', a gallery and office space for start-up companies in innovative fields, on the site of the Register Office and Macclesfield House. The objectives seem to be



Vernon Porter gets his point across to Eric Pickles at the House of Commons reception for civic societies

entirely laudable – to inspire involvement in science and to 'incubate' entrepreneurs in scientific fields. However, we felt that the design proposals fell some way short of being inspirational, as well as obscuring and virtually ignoring the Castle, its immediate neighbour, and wasting the opportunity to juxtapose imaginatively some of the oldest 'development' in the city with some dynamic modern architecture worthy of the ideals of its occupier. We await news of how this is to progress, in the wake of the disappointment widely expressed at the proposals.

The redevelopment of Westgate is an opportunity to create a new experience, genuinely unique to Oxford, linking the existing historic streets and the commercial centre to attractions like the Castle and riverside.

Meanwhile, on Walton Street, the new premises for the **Blavatnik School of Government** did receive planning consent, despite widespread concern at the height and potential for damage to city views. This is certainly going to make a dramatic and exciting contribution to the street scene, and it will be interesting to see how the design of the adjacent buildings on the Radcliffe Infirmary site will evolve. Our well-attended lecture on 6 June by Niall McLaughlin, who has a watching brief on the whole site, gave some most interesting insights.

Brookes University celebrated the opening of the newly-refurbished and extended **Abercrombie Building**, with a reception and address from the Chancellor, Shami Chakrabati, and the Vice-Chancellor, Janet Beer. The building represents about a fifth of the new building programme, with the remainder due for occupation by the end of 2013. The university will have not only some great new facilities but, perhaps for the first

time, a proper 'face' onto the world, and the distinguished speakers provided an excellent reminder of how privileged we are to have not one, but two great universities in the city.

A boost for civic societies

The increasing recognition of the important contribution made to society by community groups has been evidenced by the formation of an **All-Party Parliamentary Group for Civic Societies**. In June we were addressed by the Minister, Eric Pickles, at a House of Commons reception organised by Civic Voice, the national umbrella organisation of which we were a founder member. Our invitation to this was the prize for our contribution to Civic Day 2012, when we organised a seminar on Neighbourhood Planning. We were able to make the case for an integrated transport hub in Oxford.

*Peter Thompson
Chairman*





Why should Oxford grow?

A second event under the 'Oxford Futures' title, held in June, saw a lively debate on the question of why and how Oxford should grow. Nicholas Falk from URBED reports.

This seminar brought together over 40 members of the Society and others with an interest in the city's development to discuss different aspects of growth. The ambitious plans for Science Vale, the upgrading of Oxford's rail connections and its housing situation raise issues about the value of further growth and how the benefits can be secured without losing what is valuable.

The seminar was introduced by Dr Mick Blowfield on behalf of the Smith School for Enterprise and the Environment, where the event was held. The School provides the university with an international hub and a bridge between disciplines. The Director, Professor Gordon Clark, invited two experts from very different fields to introduce the drivers of urban change, and the relationships between transport and development.

Professor Michael Keith, who directs Oxford's Centre for Migration, Society and Policy (COMPAS) had learned the importance of distinguishing between what you can and cannot change when he was Leader of Tower Hamlets Council in East London. He highlighted six factors which affect the future of cities like Oxford: an ageing population; life-style changes which affect residential preferences; a growing low-income social care sector needing homes close to workplaces; cultural draws which boost economic success; the importance of transparency in maintaining community support; and the value of social interaction, which technology cannot replace.

Dr Tim Schwanen has joined the Transport Studies Unit from the Netherlands, where his research had focused on behaviour. Economic and transport growth are closely interlinked, and transport is a major cause of carbon emissions. Though it is tempting to look to models such as Montpellier and



Freiburg, innovations can be hard to replicate. Changing behaviour depends on complimenting investment with other policies, for example parking. Oxford's park and ride system is one of the best, but the city needs to be seen as a node in a regional system. Congestion is inevitable, but more could be done to make walking and cycling easier. Grand projects can take funds away from the existing system and primarily benefit those who are already well off.

Participants' views

Group discussions on the topics of the economy, transport, housing, the environment, and the overall picture were led by Nicholas Falk, John Glasson, Peter Headicar, Martin Stott and Peter Thompson. These were among the conclusions.

Part of the great appeal of Oxford comes from its **diversity**, but there is a real danger of further **social polarisation** driving out those on lower incomes if too few homes are provided.

The city effectively already extends beyond its **administrative boundaries**, and needs to continue to do so. A big issue is how to achieve this while reducing the city's **environmental footprint**.

A **sub-regional perspective** and consistent and **integrated policy** is

needed, looking at spatial form as a whole, not as a series of isolated 'blobs' of development linked by different forms of transport.

Planning for the future needs to be more of a **route map** and less of a blueprint. **A regional vision and genuine leadership** is essential, to choose the best scenario and to draw on the wealth of local expertise available.

In thanking everyone, the Chairman referred to *Visions for Oxford in the 21st Century* published by the Society 10 years ago and comprising 40 essays on the future of Oxford. Even then, Oxford was described as a place of 'private affluence and public poverty'. Change is inevitable but we need better ways of engaging all the communities in the process if we are to make the most of the benefits.

The next Oxford Futures events will be held on 10 September when a keynote speaker will be Wulf Daseking from Freiburg in South West Germany, an ancient university city that has transformed itself (see page 11 for details).

A full report of this event is on our website www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk

Dr Nicholas Falk
Director, URBED





What the 2011 Census tells us

The 2011 Census results provide a timely opportunity to update and reflect on our understanding of the city's challenges. This is all the more important given the Society's 'Oxford Futures' debates. Peter Headicar picks out some key findings.

Oxford is not an island and in relation to jobs, housing and commuting patterns it is a wider area which we need to consider. Here I have provided some statistics for the Oxford Travel to Work Area (hereafter the 'Oxford region') which covers most of the county except for the areas around Banbury in the north and Henley in the south-east.

Nationally the decade to 2011 was remarkable for its scale of population growth (3.5 million or 7% overall). This is more than the previous three decades combined. The principal contributory factor was a large increase in net international migration. This and natural increase (births over deaths) tends to be concentrated in cities so one of the main changes which has taken place is a stemming – and in some cases reversal – of the previous long-term drift of the population towards smaller towns and country areas.

The Oxford region is no exception, increasing by 8% overall but with wide variations within it. In Oxford City it increased by 13% – from 134,000 to 152,000. Growth in the larger free-standing towns (where the bulk of new development has been planned) was significantly less at 10% while in the smaller towns and rural areas it was just 3%. Current demographic projections suggest similar rates of change during the coming decade at least.

Responding to growth

How should we respond to this situation? As and when the economy picks up a higher rate of new development should resume in the expanding towns. But is this the right policy or is a more radical rethink required?

The downside of disproportionate growth within the city is that it has not been matched by an increase in housing. The difference in occupancy rates (persons per room) between the city and the rest of the region is widening and prices for comparable properties in the city remain a third or more higher on average.

Members may be interested to see what is happening in their particular neighbourhood. If you go to the ons.gov.uk 'neighbourhood statistics' web-page and enter your post code you will be offered a mass of data which can entertain you freely for hours! If you search for 'Oxford City Council Census' you can also access a presentation which describes the main changes which have occurred in the city since 2001.

Jobs and travel to work

On the other hand the growth of jobs in the city at least matches the increased number of workers which is conspicuously not the case elsewhere. Hence when the data on commuting is published later this year it is likely that Oxford's impressive performance in 'self-containment' (with 72% of residents working within the city in 2001) will be seen to be maintained while out-commuting from the freestanding towns, especially to Oxford, is likely to have increased.

Not only does such commuting involve greater distances, it is also much more car orientated – hence more traffic, congestion, CO₂ and pollution. Car driving as a mode of travel to work among city residents has actually fallen by 5% over the last decade (to 36% compared with 70% elsewhere).

Oxford is clearly a successful and sought-after city. On what grounds should we *not* plan for it to grow – protecting its assets, capitalising on its potential, addressing its housing problem and enabling more people to enjoy the quality of life associated with what can and should be one of England's most sustainable cities?

Change in the Oxford region 2001-2011



Source: ONS Census and Labour Market statistics
*Note jobs for all areas outside Oxford are combined



Why we should all worry about Oxford's West End

Is Oxford about to miss a key opportunity to consider the West End developments as a whole?

Clive Booth explains the Society's frustration.

Oxpens, the Oxford station area and the Westgate Centre redevelopment area are together known as Oxford's West End. Optimists might like to think that this reflects an aspiration to achieve the quality of life to be found in London's West End. Over recent weeks, consultation junkies like me will have had their fill, with more to follow: the consultation on Oxpens started on 17 June and runs to 26 July. The developers' consultation on the Westgate began on 20 June and ran for a short time. Proposals for the Oxford station master plan are expected in the late autumn, linked, it is to be hoped, with an update on the City Centre Transport Strategy.

SENDRA, the lively residents' association for Oxpens, is actively contributing to the consultation on the comprehensive redevelopment of Oxpens. This is the area bounded by the railway line to the west, the River Thames to the south, Oxpens Road (which runs past the ice rink) and Thames Street to the east and Osney Lane to the north. Unsurprisingly, some people have doubts about the proposals for a long row of high student residences along the railway line (does this sound familiar?) and the loss of biodiversity that would entail the meadows becoming a very formal-looking park, criss-crossed with paths leading nowhere. On the other hand, the 'taming' of Oxpens Road using shared space principles, together with a new public square, could positively transform the atmosphere of the area (though see p8).

However, the fact that Oxpens, the Westgate and the station area are being pursued on different timescales with no comprehensive development and transport plan for the *whole* of the West End, could easily lead to a poorer end result than could have been possible. This looks set to be an opportunity of a lifetime missed.



Oxpens Meadow, a green space in the West End

Photo courtesy of SENDRA

The Barton West development

An outline planning application for Barton West, the largest new green field development in Oxford for many years, was submitted at the beginning of June. If approved, building will begin in 2015. The Society has played an important part in helping to shape the proposals, particularly in the debate on ways to prevent the new development becoming a ghetto for social problems, disconnected from the rest of the city. The City Council has formed a partnership with the developer Grosvenor who have a strong reputation for successful development of this kind. Details of the landscaping of the public open space and design of the 885 new homes, of which 40 per cent will be affordable, will follow in a series of detailed planning applications.

The development will include a park, social, retail and community facilities. The routes for pedestrians, cycles, buses and other vehicles have been carefully thought out to enable people to reach other parts of Oxford while moderating the effect on existing communities. However, there is understandable concern in Northway, Marston and Old Marston about the effects on traffic, flooding and sewerage. We will publish our response to the outline application on our website.

No free-for-all for large home extensions

In the last newsletter we reported the Government's proposals to allow larger extensions to houses that would not require planning permission and give

neighbours no chance to object. This would run for three years, until the end of May 2016. The Civic Society was by no means alone in protesting at the potential effects on neighbours of this proposed relaxation of so-called 'permitted development rights'. Indeed, many Government back benchers expressed deep disquiet.

Under these pressures, the Secretary of State, Eric Pickles, introduced a significant concession in the shape of a neighbour consultation scheme. This is not a complete U-turn, but effectively it re-introduces a form of planning approval. The key features are:

- Homeowners wishing to build extensions under the new powers would notify their local council of the details.
- The council would then inform the adjoining neighbours, as already happens for planning applications.
- If no objections are made to the council by the neighbours within a set period, the development can proceed.
- If objections are raised by neighbours, the council will consider whether the development would have an unacceptable impact on neighbours' amenity.
- This is a form of 'prior approval' process which allows for consideration by ward councillors, and (if the council wishes) by a Planning Committee.
- There will be no fee for householders to go through this process.

We will be keeping this under review.



From St Giles' to your street

The Streets for People team continues to be active on a number of fronts, building on our view that streets are social places, not just there to facilitate the flow of traffic.

It was good to hear the role of streets being debated on a recent Bill Heine programme on BBC Radio Oxford. The programme specifically mentioned **St Giles'**. This avenue of historic and superb buildings is one of the jewels in Oxford's civic crown yet is actually quite hard to enjoy because so much of it is given to traffic.

We are supporting an Oxford Pedestrians Association (OxPA) initiative to persuade the County Council to reconfigure the street so that people can enjoy and admire it, while maintaining traffic flows. We are in discussion with shared space expert Ben Hamilton-Baillie. On page 7 Malcolm Graham explains how this wonderful street came into being.

On Foot in Oxford

Walking is the main way in which streets can be enjoyed and used – whether for those getting from A to B, those who want to explore the city, or

those who just want to amble. Our **On Foot in Oxford** programme is currently pursuing two projects, jointly with OxPA and Oxford Ramblers.

First, we are compiling a **list of published walks**. We are working from the premise that many of our members, city residents and visitors are not aware of the wealth of self-guided walks that have been published, on a variety of interesting subjects. We have compiled a list of about 70 walks and expect to have a published version before the end of the year.

Second, we are looking into the feasibility of a **walking map** of Oxford. A number of groups are interested in such a map, including the County Council, and we are talking to them to see how best to make it happen.

Enjoying our streets

We continue to promote **street parties** as the best way for neighbours to get to know each other, the first step in building stronger communities. This year, with no national events to celebrate, Oxford will see fewer street parties than last. But we still expect lots of people to 'claim their street' for an

afternoon, with perhaps 40 or 50 events this summer. Our message is there is no need to wait for a national event before having a street party – they are appropriate at any time.

We also support the **'Playing Out'** initiative – in which streets are closed for a short period at the end of the school day so that children can safely play in the street. This idea is taking off in Oxford with 15 such play events taking place this year. Two streets in South Oxford are particularly active.

Oxford Streets for People: *Richard Bradley (Coordinator), Tony Joyce, Peter Thompson, Ros Weatherall*

One of the finest buildings in St Giles', the former Judge's Lodging, was the venue for the **President's reception** on 5 June. This delightful occasion was an opportunity for the Society to welcome new members and to thank the people who contribute to our working groups or work in partnership with us.

Our thanks go to St John's College for their hospitality.





St Giles' – the making of an Oxford gem

Local historian Malcolm Graham explains how St Giles' came to be the exquisite avenue of today.

The width of St Giles' can partly be explained because the Banbury and Woodstock roads funnel into the street and the movement of people, carts and livestock must always have needed space. St Giles' was also outside the town's medieval defences so there was less pressure on space and suburban development, evident by the 12th century, could be more generous in scale. For hundreds of years, some St Giles' properties were farmsteads cultivating land in the north of the parish, and old maps show a pond south of St. Giles' churchyard.

Until the 19th century, there were forecourts or gardens in front of most properties in St Giles', extending out as far as today's plane trees. St John's College purchased the freehold of their forecourt in 1576, thus securing the area now enclosed by a stone wall. On Loggan's map of Oxford in 1675, the other forecourts are separated from the main thoroughfare by a ditch crossed here and there by little bridges. Post and rail fences defined some property boundaries, but, when James II visited Oxford in August 1687, the City temporarily removed all the barriers on the west side and filled in the ditch to create a smooth roadway for his retinue. In the event, the royal party kept to the broader, if rougher, middle of the street!

The ideal place to live

By the 18th century the street became the ideal place of residence for the Town and Gown elite – professionals, successful tradesmen and academics. Loggan shows some trees in St Giles' and more were planted. In 1773, Sir John Peshall described St Giles' as 'a well-built street... planted with a row of



St Giles' in the early 19th century

elms on each side and having parterres of green before the respective houses.'

In the modernising frenzy which followed the Oxford Improvement Act of 1771, the Reverend Edward Tatham envisaged removing all the trees to make St Giles' 'the most elegant street in Oxford'. He proposed a carriage road down the centre with footpaths on either side, and lawns and greenery occupying the space between the footpaths and the houses. As an alternative, he suggested a grass plot with shrubs or a water feature in the centre, and the carriage road and footpaths on either side.

Nothing came of Tatham's plans for St Giles' and, although some trees were felled, Faden's map in 1789 shows an avenue of trees on both sides of the street. Some of these elm trees were diseased by the mid 19th century and they were gradually replaced by plane trees, the first of which was planted by Edward, Prince of Wales, in 1859. Wooden posts continued to separate the forecourts until about 1893, and the local historian, Herbert Hurst, recalled in 1899 that

people still living had been punished for trespassing in these areas or leaping the posts.

St Giles' acquired new focal points with the building of the Martyrs' Memorial (1841-3) and the War Memorial (1921). The street itself was gradually adapted to the needs of a growing city with the introduction of a horse tram line, a cab-stand, underground toilets, and street lighting. Unlike most of Oxford's historic streets, spacious St Giles' was easily adapted to the Motor Age. Moving vehicles took over the central area and stationary ones parked under the trees.

Hurst remarked that 'we have widened a street over-wide already, macadamized the whole, and are doing our best to kill by thirst every tree we have planted.' Now, we can perhaps consider re-designing this 'most elegant street' – which has no fewer than 44 listed buildings – so that residents and visitors can enjoy it throughout the year, and not just during the traffic-free days of St Giles's Fair.



Loggan's 1675 map, with south at the top, showing St Giles'



Tackling our carbon footprint ...

The Oxford-based Low Carbon Hub is a new social enterprise that works with communities to lower carbon emissions. Georgina Matthews explains how the Hub works.

The Hub works across the city and county, developing renewable energy ('powering up') and energy reduction ('powering down') projects for local benefit and a cleaner, greener environment. The organisation is currently funded by Intelligent Energy Europe but over the next three years aims to demonstrate a self-funding, sustainable business model for community energy.

'Powering up'

The Hub's expert 'powering up' team is led by Barbara Hammond, CEO of the Hub and director of West Oxford Community Renewables. They help community groups develop renewable energy projects based on the area's natural resources from feasibility, planning and tendering through to raising the finance and project completion. A pipeline of renewable schemes includes eight micro-hydro installations along the Upper Thames and solar photovoltaic schemes on community buildings

(schools, churches and village halls). The Hub's first project was an 18.65kW solar PV installation on Eynsham Village Hall, opened by David Cameron in September 2012.

The Hub also supported the launch of Osney Lock Hydro's share offer in April, which managed to raise over £500,000 in just three weeks, over double the original target. Construction work has started on the project and will be completed in February of next year.

'Powering down'

The 'powering down' team works through community groups to recruit households for energy efficiency assessments and improvements. They are piloting approaches in several communities with grants from the Department of Energy and Climate Change, including the Warming Barton scheme to improve energy-efficiency of local homes.

We all know that climate change is



Work starts on the Osney Lock hydro scheme

one of the most pressing issues of our time and community action is essential if the UK is to achieve energy security and reach our legally-binding carbon reduction targets. Ed Davey, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, "wants to see community energy projects rolled out across the country" (*The Guardian*, June). We have a long way to go to achieve current targets of 40% CO₂ reduction by 2020 (Oxford City Council) but our local communities are already leading the way.

For more information call 01865 246 099 or see www.lowcarbonhub.org

... and our litter



The OxClean Spring Clean in March was a great success, with community groups, schools and individuals turning out in force to support it.

This year 70 community groups and most of the city's state schools turned out to clean up streets, 'grot spots', car parks, stretches of the ring road, parks, recreation grounds, allotments, nature reserves, roundabouts ...

This enjoyable communal effort produced over 7,000 kilos of waste and recyclables, a terrific total. The photo shows a group from Friends of Quarry who spruced up the local alleyways among other areas.

Keep the date – in 2014 the Spring Clean will take place on Friday 7 and Saturday 8 March.

Fancy joining the OxClean team? We need helpers to store/distribute equipment, preferably in north or west Oxford, and help with publicity and campaigning. Please contact Vernon Porter at info@oxcivicsoc.org.uk

The transport conundrum



Frideswide Square – back to the drawing board?

Do the three plans for the West End do enough to tackle the transport issues?

The draft **Oxpens masterplan** (now published) and the **Westgate plans** (on show in the Westgate centre recently) show little evidence of coordination either in Oxpens Road (major traffic artery or pedestrian-and cyclist-friendly road with 10 mph zones?) or in bus use. It appears that Queen Street will be closed to all buses, possibly allowing those travelling from the station to get off by Bonn Square, walk for two minutes to St Aldates, and get on the previous bus, while the first one follows a long dog-leg down Castle Street and a re-aligned Norfolk Street past John Lewis. This masterplan concentrates almost entirely upon the provision of housing and commercial premises, with little attention to transport and the station developments, despite the possibilities for ameliorating some of the city's transport problems.

Contradictory statements in the brief for the **station masterplan** make it unclear whether the Oxpens option for a transport hub will be examined, though the

principle of a transport hub appears to have been accepted. It is clear that the commitment to a wider and deeper Botley Road bridge will require significant revisions of the Frideswide Square proposals.

One of the important themes in the Society's recent event *Why should Oxford grow?* was transport, with a paper by Peter Headicar, a member of the Group, on Change in the Oxford Region, emphasising the need for an integrated multi-modal system with easy interconnections (see also p4).

We continue to pursue our proposals for a **new transport hub** at the Oxpens, which we believe represents the best, and probably the cheapest, solution to the problems. This includes the generous offer by Roger Evans of Roger Evans Associates to prepare a 1:2000 three-dimensional model of the area between Carfax and the railway to illustrate them.

Transport Group: *Greg Birdseye, Juliet Blackburn, Ian Green, Peter Headicar, Hugh Jaeger, Tony Joyce, Andrew Pritchard (Convenor), Graham Smith, Peter Thompson*

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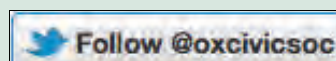
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**To receive your newsletter by email, or
to change from email to the print
version, please contact:**

membership@oxcivicsoc.org.uk



Booking form

September – November ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **24 August**. 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		
A central Oxford circular walk Saturday 5 October, 2pm Sunday 6 October, 2pm@£4	
Visit to St Mary the Virgin church Saturday 2 November, 2.30pm@£7	
Visit to the Oxford Bus Company Thursday 14 November, 11am@£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'

September – November 2013

*ticketed events

Tuesday 10 September†
Oxford Futures symposium and debate on 'The way we live – how can our neighbourhoods be fit for 21st century living?'

12.30pm Symposium
6pm Debate

†Bookings to Oxford Brookes please – see page 11

Saturday 5 October* 2pm
Sunday 6 October* 2pm

A central Oxford circular walk, with Malcolm Graham

Tuesday 8 October 7.30 for 8pm
Oxford then and now, a talk by Chris Koenig

Saturday 2 November* 2.30pm

Visit to St Mary the Virgin church

Tuesday 12 November, 7.30 for 8pm
Oxford in the Civil War, a talk by Alastair Lack

Thursday 14 November* 11am

Visit to the Oxford Bus Company, led by Phil Southall

***Contact for booking/tickets only:**
(except Oxford Futures debate)

Alan Hobbs, 66 Southfield Road
Oxford OX4 1PA
Tel: 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 September – November 2013

Open talks – all welcome

Free to members, £4 for non-members – pay on entry

Oxford then and now: how yesterday's news is always present today

Tuesday 8 October

Magdalen College Auditorium, Long Wall

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

Members will be familiar with **Chris Koenig's** fascinating 'The History Man' articles which appear in *The Oxford Times*. Chris Koenig will examine some of his favourite aspects of the city's historic past, with a journalist's approach to questions which constantly intrigue him. What was there before? How did things get to be the way they are? Who changed things and why?

Oxford in the Civil War

Tuesday 12 November

The Bastion, Jesus College, Ship Street

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

When Charles I made his headquarters in Oxford from 1642 to 1646 in the Civil War, the city was at the centre of England's story and changed from a place of learning into a military garrison. **Alastair Lack**, who convenes our Programme Group, will discuss the impact of the Royalist presence in Oxford and the reaction to the demands of the war from both Town and Gown.

Members-only visits and walks

Tickets needed: see booking form on page 10

A central Oxford circular walk

Saturday 5 October, 2pm

Sunday 6 October, 2pm

Tickets: £4

Two further walks by the popular local historian, **Malcolm Graham**, concentrate on the buildings 'in between' the familiar university and city buildings of central Oxford. The walk will take in the architecture of Broad Street, Turl Street and much else. Shops and houses – usually overlooked in comparison with colleges, churches and libraries – often have a long and interesting history of their own.

St Mary the Virgin – the University church

Saturday 2 November, 2.30pm

Tickets: £7

The University church has a long, important and fascinating place in the history of Oxford Town and Gown. Following the recent extensive refurbishment, there will be a guided tour of the interior of the church, the Old Library and for those who wish to, a chance to climb up to the tower. The tour will be preceded by a short introduction and conclude with tea, either in The Vaults or in the Old Library.

Visit to the Oxford Bus Company

Thursday 14 November, 11am-1pm

Tickets: £7

A chance to visit the depot and workshops of the Oxford Bus Company at Watlington Road, Cowley. Phil Southall, Operations Director at Oxford Bus Company, will guide the tour and discuss the latest changes on Oxford's bus system. Tea and coffee will be served. **Note:** there is no car parking; travel details will be sent with the tickets.

Oxford Futures debates – open to all

Tickets needed: book by Tues 27 August – see below

The way we live – how can our neighbourhoods be fit for 21st century living?

Symposium: Oxford Brookes, Tuesday 10 September, 12.30 – 5.30pm

Debate: Town Hall, Long Room, Tuesday 10 September, 6 – 9pm

Oxford needs to combine planned urban extensions with upgrading existing housing estates in ways that will cut travel and energy use while also offering exciting and unique places to live in. The afternoon **symposium** will combine a series of short presentations with workshops led by experts. The topics will focus on different aspects of building new housing in ways that are truly sustainable, and will test out the principles of 'smarter growth'. This event will be led by the **Academy of Urbanism**.

The evening debate, led by the **Royal Society of Arts**, will consider the way we want to live in the 21st century. **Neil Bennett**, a Partner at Farrells, will present a UK perspective on new housing concepts. The keynote presentation will be given by **Wulf Daseking**, who for over 25 years has directed the exemplary extensions of Freiburg, a historic university town in Germany and European City of the Year in 2012.

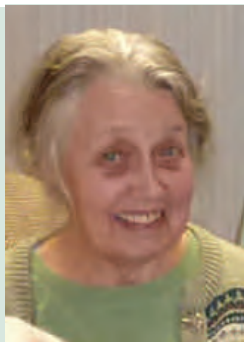
Both events are free and open to all, though a small charge will be made for refreshments at the symposium. **Space is limited so booking is essential.** To request a booking form or enquire please contact Karen Hughes on 01865 483560 or khughes@brookes.ac.uk. The full programme is on our website www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk

OCS people

With new faces on the Executive Committee, a long-standing friend stepping aside, and awards from the City, there is much going on ...

At the AGM we welcomed **Richard Dodd** as our new Hon Treasurer in succession to Gordon Balme. Originally from Lancashire, Richard studied engineering at St John's College and subsequently worked as an engineer, latterly as a training manager. Retirement gave him the opportunity to return to Oxford.

Gillian Argyle made a welcome return to the Executive Committee and we also welcomed **Tony Turton** who has recently joined the Communications Team.



It was with much sadness that we accepted the resignation of **Kate Joyce** as Convenor of the Planning Group. Kate started commenting on planning applications on behalf of the Society 16 years ago, originally as a one-woman band. The Group gradually formed around her, to share out the workload of reading all applications and selecting those worthy of comment to the Planning Department.

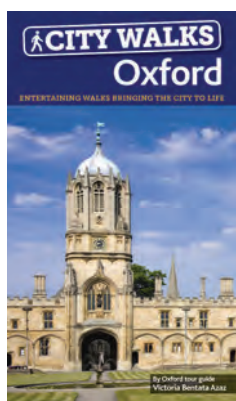
It's thanks to Kate's pioneering work that the Society has so much experience of planning matters and the respect it enjoys today. We shall miss her greatly but know she will continue to support our work.

Congratulations to **Richard Bradley** who was awarded a Certificate of Honour by the Lord Mayor for service to the City at a ceremony in May. Richard is Convenor of the Society's Oxford Streets for People initiative and is also Treasurer of Headington Action and active in Friends of Quarry.

Left to right: Tony Joyce, Vice-President, Richard Bradley, Liz Grosvenor, Membership Secretary and Sir Clive Booth, Vice-Chairman



Book shelf

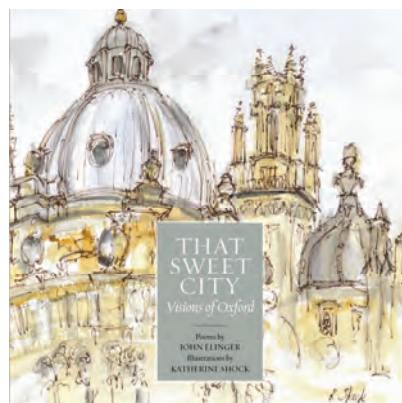


City Walks Oxford by tour guide Victoria Bentata Azaz describes 15 short walks in and around the city. With simple route descriptions and maps, this fully-illustrated guide offers insights into Oxford's rich past,

from links to the English Monarchy to its key role in the history of science.

The book is published by Crimson Publishing and costs £9.99.

That Sweet City: Visions of Oxford is a book of poems by John Elinger and illustrations by Katherine Shock that evoke the city's timeless charms. The content is designed around seven themed walks, from seven gardens to seven 'treasures'. Published by Signal books, price £12.99.



The county's churches are among the richest and most diverse in the country.

Oxfordshire's Best Churches by Richard Wheeler describes the art and architecture of 116 of them.



Fully illustrated with 340 colour photos, the guide is published by Fircone books price £25 (hardback) and is available from bookshops or online from www.firconebooks.com

Visions is published in March, July and November by Oxford Civic Society. ISSN 2051-137X