

VISIONS

No 126, November 2013

Contents

- 1-2 Chairman's commentary
- 3-4 What can Freiburg teach us?
- 5 Will this Magnet attract?
- 6 Planning - Kate Joyce looks back
- 7 Strengthening communities
- 8 Hogacre Common/Contacts
- 9 Transport round-up
- 10-11 Programme
- 12 OxClean in schools

Photo: Trams in the heart of an historic university city.



Oxford – the weakest link?

By Peter Thompson, Chairman

Save the dates!

Spring Clean 2014

7 and 8 March – register now!

See page 12 for more detail

AGM

Thursday 13 March 2014

All welcome at our AGM –
more details on pages 9 and 11

Take part in our member survey

Tell us what you think! See enclosed

After five years of stagnation, the national economy is beginning to show some dynamism. Will this change future priorities?

It does seem that there is increasing recognition that Oxford's potential to contribute to a resurgent economy has not been adequately exploited and that this needs to be addressed. Our region is seen as the weak point of the Cambridge – London – Oxford triangle of technological innovation and expertise, perceived as a key component of the future national economy. Currently, the Oxford region falls significantly behind Cambridge in its economic performance, despite several advantages. Many mainland European cities seem

able to demonstrate greater improvement in the quality of the built environment, adaptation to the potential effects of climate change, the transport infrastructure, and the consequent well-being of their communities.

The extent of Oxford's potential, and some of the reasons for its failure to make the most of it, are described in a new report *The Oxfordshire Innovation Engine – Realising the Growth Potential* commissioned by Oxford University and Science Oxford, supported by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The importance of the issues the report addresses can be judged by its launch by the Rt Hon David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, at a major event at the Said Business School. The authors



The UK's synchrotron science facility, just one high-tech industry along the 'knowledge economy spine'. Photo courtesy of Diamond Light Source

suggest that implementation of its recommendations could increase our region's contribution to the national economy by "at least" £1 billion within 10 years, representing a 30% increase on current projections.

Among the recommendations are the implementation of a 'Knowledge Economy Spine' for Oxfordshire, comprising housing and high-tech employment focused on Bicester, Oxford and the 'Science Vale' (the Didcot - Harwell - Culham area). This would be supported by improvements in the "capacity and connectivity of strategic and local transport infrastructure", described as the A34 trunk road, the main north-south rail links and fast bus services between the rail stations and main employment centres.

The city's economic hot spots?

As far as development within the city boundary is concerned, there is a recommendation for additional office space at the Northern Gateway, in the city centre, particularly at Oxpens, and for an expanded 'Centre for Innovation' at the 'Magnet' site on New Road, together with a biosciences hub at the Churchill Hospital campus. All of these proposals are likely to be controversial. The New Road site is highly sensitive, as the scale and design of any building there may meet opposition. There is a strong feeling that Oxpens should predominantly be used for housing, the need for which is critical, rather than office space. The Northern Gateway is beset with traffic congestion and poor air quality, and any further development on Old Road is also dependent on

solving the problem of too much traffic.

The Freiburg connection

In the meantime, at the latest in the series of 'Oxford Futures' events in September which we have promoted, a fascinating talk by Professor Wulf Daseking described the development of Freiburg in Germany, with which Oxford shares many characteristics. Professor Daseking's opening remark about his visit to Oxford was that it was a beautiful city strangled by traffic. It seems that the need to get to grips with

transport issues in our city is evident to all! In fact, many of the ingredients which appear to have been instrumental in the creation of one of Europe's most successful cities, with one of its most contented populations, seem very similar to many of the recommendations of the *Oxfordshire Innovation Engine* report. There is more about this on pages 3-4.

Oxford is inextricably tied to its region, so planning must be consistent and coordinated across the region – and leadership is critical.

The need for leadership

It is also clear that the vision represented by the report's recommendations, of growth of both employment and affordable housing, in a distributed pattern across the region, properly connected with efficient, convenient transport systems, will require cooperation across a wide range of agencies, of an order of which there has been little or no evidence in the recent past. The institutional structures which prevail here are unhelpful and less conducive to this than, say, at Cambridge, and even less so than at Freiburg. Perhaps the most significant and concluding recommendation of the report is that "strong public and private sector leadership and consistent messaging" must be provided to realise the potential of the region.

The themes that Oxford is inextricably tied to its region, and vice-versa, that planning must be consistent and coordinated across the region, that transport at all levels is critical to this

planning, and that cooperation and leadership are essential, are ones which we have expressed repeatedly. We hoped that the formation of the LEP in 2010 might begin to address these themes, and our hopes were boosted when invitations were issued by the Government for funding bids under the 'City Deals' initiative. The commissioning of the *Oxfordshire Innovation Engine* report, and its launch by the Minister are perhaps more evidence that our hopes are justified.

Then and now

In 2003 the Society published *Visions for Oxford in the 21st Century*. Ten years on, this anthology of 35 views, opinions and futuristic imagination makes fascinating reading in the context of the issues discussed above. Helen Lawton Smith concluded: "What is needed is an integrated approach to addressing these issues led by local politicians who need to be better informed about the nature and consequences of the growth of the high-tech economy." The issues she refers to include: a shortage of suitable business accommodation, high costs of housing and traffic congestion. Her vision is of an Oxfordshire in which "partnerships are forged to position the economy not only at the leading edge of technology, but as a social, economic and political innovator". Could we at last see some of this and the other optimistic visions presented in the book begin to materialise?

Victor Berry and Charles MacCallum

It's with sadness that we announce the deaths of two very influential members, Victor Berry and Charles MacCallum. See page 4 for an appreciation.

Peter Thompson
Chairman





What can Freiburg teach us?

Freiburg in south-west Germany has many parallels with Oxford – an ancient university city surrounded by modern industry. Its chief planner for 30 years, Wulf Daseking, recently explained the thinking behind the planning of this most successful of cities. Nicholas Falk reports.

At the 'Oxford Futures' event in September, Wulf Daseking gave an inspiring picture of Freiburg. His starting point was recognition that pressures on world resources and the potential consequences of climate change make it essential that urban development is future-proofed – designed for families who will:

- be less likely to own cars or want large gardens
- value easy access to jobs and neighbourhood facilities
- choose to live in cities that offer a better quality of life
- want good transport facilities (75% living within 250 metres of a tram), and
- want good social and cultural facilities.

Freiburg streets are full of children, not cars. Communities are strong, with a third living in social housing and the majority renting. New houses are built to 'passiv haus', zero-energy standards. They cost 12% more to build, but break even in seven years.

Development policies aim for well-connected neighbourhoods with high densities to make good public transport viable. Peripheral development followed intensification of the city centre, and distinctive streets were designed by different architects.

There has been strong political leadership with institutional capability that makes the most of local resources. As a result Freiburg provides a new ABC of place-making leadership:



Freiburg's streets are full of children, not cars

AMBITION to create great places

Freiburg has grown 20% in 20 years and become one of the best places to live in Germany, despite 30% lower incomes than the regional average. The city's appeal across all age groups lies in maintaining its character and building sustainable urban extensions. Growth has not been at any cost; rather, the very highest environmental standards have been pursued.

The vision for the city emerged from:

- community pressures to avoid nuclear power – Freiburg's image is as the 'solar capital of Europe'
- extensive consultation on how people want to live
- close collaboration between city and university, one of the oldest in Germany
- design competitions for key sites.

Quality of life is high because the car has been tamed – the centre is traffic-free and people use the modern,

affordable tram network, integrated with buses. Cycling is prioritised. Social housing is mixed with privately-owned housing and is indistinguishable. People live better on lower incomes because of:

- lower expenditure on cars and commuting (a monthly regional travel pass costs €50)
- lower energy bills from well-insulated houses and high levels of local energy generation from renewables
- shorter commuting time so less stress and more leisure
- cleaner air, healthier environments and better life-styles.

Spatial planning is at the levels of city region, city, neighbourhood, public realm and house to ensure that policy is consistent and development is appropriate. Supermarkets are controlled so they do not destroy the centre; research activity and spin-off industry have been encouraged; community facilities and open space are co-produced and maintained with and by residents. (continued overleaf)



What can Freiburg teach us?

(continued from page 3)

BROKERAGE to secure quality deals

The City Council drives the development process. With few resources, the City has used all its powers to optimise results. Successful 'deals' are due to:

- an agreed spatial framework, co-ordinating different local authorities' input and approved by the regional government
- a clear building plan defining uses, densities and street layouts for specific sites
- authority to freeze land prices in specified development zones
- expertise in negotiation, and flexibility to innovate, for example, in providing advance community facilities, or dealing with utilities and transport providers
- national and regional bank funding enabling servicing of sites before sale to builders
- substantial federal and regional government funding for key projects

Distinctive new streets in Freiburg are designed by different architects

- reserving small plots for local developers, housing associations, co-operatives and self-build groups, giving large savings on building costs.

CONTINUITY of key personnel

Development is protracted so continuity of the team vision and capacity to deliver it is vital. A collaborative leadership approach has been achieved through:

- teams with urban design and development economics expertise producing briefs and negotiating with developers
- an elected Mayor, leading councillors overseeing different departments, but considerable



freedom for the officers

- decentralisation, with cities having autonomy, leading to job satisfaction, well-motivated staff and low turnover
- support for cooperative groups who commission their own homes and public spaces, with consequent long-term commitment
- close relationships and frequent contact between the City Council and the main employers, such as the university.

What can we learn from this?

Victor Berry and Charles MacCallum



Members of the Society will be saddened to hear of the death of **Victor Berry**, one of our founding members. As a practising architect, Victor was a most valuable member of the

original team who fought the 1960s' proposals for inner relief roads through the city, and wrote the Society's first pamphlet *Let's LIVE in Oxford*. A significant chapter of this was devoted to the destructive effects of the proposed major highways on the established communities within the city. In 1971,

Victor, as Planning Secretary of the Society, published his own study of *Summertown: Towards an Integrated Community*.

For the next 25 years, as his professional commitments permitted, he continued to serve the planning group as a member, with further periods as its secretary. It is largely due to Victor and the devoted group whose scrutiny of planning applications continued undiminished, that the Society has established its position as a significant consultee on planning matters, helping to shape our city's future.

Those who had the pleasure of working with him will always remember his quiet charm and effectiveness, and be

grateful for the vital contribution he made to the Society and to the city.

Tony Joyce, Vice President

Charles MacCallum, who also died recently, was elected to the Executive Committee in March 1993. His experience and architectural knowledge were very valuable, and his wry sense of humour much enjoyed (by those who could fathom his Scottish accent!). He was appointed Professor of Architecture at Glasgow University and Head of the Mackintosh School in 1994 but he and his wife Andrée kept their home in Oxford and continued as members to support the Society.

Sheila Glazebrook



Will this Magnet attract or repel?

'The Magnet' is but one controversial planning issue that we're currently involved in, as Clive Booth reports.

It cannot be easy for a distinguished firm of architects like Foster and Partners to go back to the drawing board and produce another new and radically different design for an iconic site, but that is exactly what they have done for the Science Oxford 'Magnet' building on the west side of the Castle Mound. The Magnet will contain gallery space aimed at presenting science in an exciting way to children and adults, a planetarium and an innovation centre for embryonic science enterprises.

The new design proposes an ingenious way of giving the Mound a more open setting as well as preserving the view as seen from Hythe Bridge Street. It does this by creating a rising tier of three stepped buildings, the lowest closest to the Mound and the highest – still no higher than Macdesfield House – adjoining Tidmarsh Lane.

While the improved relationship with the Mound and the careful attention to the preservation of the view are to be welcomed, the detailing of the long high frontage along Tidmarsh Lane will need all the undoubted skills of the Foster team if it is not to seem overwhelming.

Not only that, but as Tony Joyce has pointed out, the sense of a 'gateway' to the historic city centre as seen from the west is at present very effectively created by the juxtaposition of Nuffield College on one side and the former Registry Office on the other side of New Road. It would be a pity if the frontage of the Magnet building on the corner of Tidmarsh Lane and New Road did not continue this sense of a 'gateway'.

But the first reaction of Society officers at the briefing is that this is a design which has distinct promise. Whether the Registry Office should be sacrificed is a subject I will return to next time.

Cross about St Cross

Regrettably, the proposed new St Cross building flanking Pusey Street and Pusey Lane in the city centre did not



St Cross as seen from Pusey Street showing the window that would be obscured and the historic wall that would be demolished

receive a warm reception. The Society was among some 40 objectors. The main issue was not building new student accommodation on this site. Indeed, there was much support for the sympathetic design for which St Cross *already* had planning permission.

To be successful, modern buildings in conservation areas must 'respect' their settings. In our view the application failed this test. The City's Historic Environment Policy 7 says that planning permission will only be granted for development that preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and it will not be granted for proposals involving the substantial demolition of a structure that contributes to the special interest of the conservation area.

This application did not satisfy these requirements. Objectors argued that it was over-bearing, dominating and belittled the heritage assets that surrounded it. It hid the wonderful Grade-two-star west window of Pusey Chapel and destroyed the Grade 2 listed boundary walls. It is pleasing to report that the West Area Planning Committee refused the application by six votes to two. Another Roger Dudman Way was avoided!

Roger Dudman Way: Independent Review

The Society has a place on the six-member working party that is overseeing the independent review by the distinguished town planner, Vincent Goodstadt. His task is to assess whether in the context of the Oxford University planning application to build student accommodation on Roger Dudman Way next to Port Meadow, the City Council complied with its planning processes and met statutory and national policy requirements, how the processes compare with other local planning authorities and to identify best practice. Mr Goodstadt has made an energetic start and we look forward to contributing to the review.

Westgate Centre – becoming real at last?

After so many years of stop-start, it seems hard to believe that a new Westgate Centre, double the size of the present one, has reached the significant milestone of an outline application. The Society's view is that the application cannot sensibly be considered until the County Council has produced a comprehensive traffic and transport plan for the whole city centre. Watch this space!



Planning – Kate Joyce looks back

Kate Joyce led the Planning Group for 16 years until her recent retirement from this key role. In the first of two articles, she looks back at how the work has changed in that time.

When Victor Berry first approached me at the end of 1996 about taking over his role as Planning Secretary, I had no idea what the job entailed and no background in planning matters. However, following my retirement from teaching of biology at Headington School and having recently lost my first husband, Peter Miller, I was looking for some useful way of keeping myself fully occupied.

On accepting the role, and with it a seat on the Society's Committee, the planning team quickly initiated me into the routine, which has changed little to the present day. It consists of selecting from the city's weekly planning lists those applications which appear to merit closer scrutiny. Then at their fortnightly meetings, (held currently in St Aldates Chambers) members of the team examine these applications, and any others to which we have been alerted by members, other residents or community groups. When it seems necessary we send comments or objections to the City Council Planning Office.

The planning boom

In Victor's last full year in office there were about 1,900 planning applications and we sent some 210 letters. Over the years there has been a relentless growth in the number of planning applications coming in, as the pressures on Oxford have increased: in 2012 there were over 3,200. However, over this time the number of our letters has not risen proportionately – perhaps because some applications have been for minor changes, or because applicants are becoming more alert to what needs to be taken into consideration before an application is submitted.

The original group of David Townsend, Chris Rayson and Mark Barrington-Ward has now been replaced by a larger group of members, and I have been very grateful for the way they have come forward to help in the task.



Another valuable aspect of the group's work has been the increasing number of early consultations with developers, to seek our reactions and sometimes make modifications to schemes before the final design is decided and a detailed planning application submitted.

At the Town Hall ...

What has changed considerably has been the way planning applications have been considered by the City Council. In 1996 there was only one Planning Committee which met regularly in the morning in the Town Hall to consider a very long list of applications and the planning officers' recommendations.

The first task was to agree which decisions should be accepted on the officers' recommendation: the remainder were decided by the committee. This often took well into lunch-time – sandwiches were served to members as time wore on. Sometimes an overflow meeting was necessary the following day. Members of the public who wished to address the Committee had to find the time during working hours. There were usually few people in the audience. An advantage was that more specialists could be called in from City or County Hall to answer detailed queries. In those days, there

was less pressure to achieve performance targets, and decisions were sometimes postponed to the next meeting, for additional reports or site visits by the Committee.

When the city was divided into six areas, each with its own Committee with devolved powers to determine planning applications and meeting in the evenings, a wider spectrum of the general public could become involved, and all Councillors took a role in planning decisions, often with more detailed local knowledge which reduced the need for site visits. Decisions on less controversial applications were delegated directly to planning officers.

Now we have returned to a more centralised system, with just the two East and West Area Planning Committees, still meeting in the evenings for greater public accessibility, and with only a proportion of councillors directly involved. Nevertheless, the essential needs remain the same – the full understanding of the site and of the details of the application by committee members, and the quality of the reports and recommendations from hard-pressed officers.

The Group's comments on planning applications are on our website:

www.oxcivicsoc.org.uk/index.php/planning-commentary



Strengthening our communities

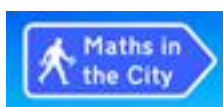
We continue to be active in community matters such as helping groups engaged in neighbourhood planning, promoting streets as social spaces, and more ...

20's plenty everywhere!

When we successfully campaigned for 20mph speed limits in residential areas in 2009 we little realised how this policy would catch on. Many towns and cities have now adopted this approach and Birmingham and the City of London are about to follow suit. Locally the police have now agreed to enforce the new speed limits more rigorously. We see 20mph limits as a vital step to claiming back our streets for the people who live in them.

Oxford walks

There are many interesting walks in Oxford but are you aware of what's available? For example, did you know that Professor Marcus du Sautoy has described a walk about Oxford mathematicians? Or that you can follow a five-mile walk to look at milestones? In collaboration with Oxford Pedestrians Association and the local Ramblers Association group, we have just completed a list of 'interesting' walks and categorised them by theme, length and accessibility. We're now working on a new website which will list the walks – watch this space!



Neighbourhood Planning

Through the Localism Act, the Government has given communities the right to create Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) to influence the amount and type of developments in a given area. Four areas have taken up the challenge: **Wolvercote, Summertown/ St Margaret's, Headington and Jericho**. And a fifth – **East Oxford** – is actively thinking about it. We are supporting all these groups.



Both Wolvercote and Summertown/ St Margaret's obtained the City's formal recognition of their geographic areas in July and are well on their way to getting membership of their residents' Forums agreed. The other two groups are following closely.

The creation of an NP will not be easy because it requires a lot of time and expertise. But the two front-running groups are finding that the process is helpful as it gives the group a greater voice in discussions with the City's planners. Indeed, they are finding it more productive to concentrate on working with the Planning Authority on specific developments such as Wolvercote's Paper Mill site or Summertown's Diamond Place, rather than writing a full NP! It will be interesting to see how things progress.

Any excuse for a party ...

For the sixth year running we have encouraged residents to hold **street parties** as a means of developing neighbourliness. Street parties are becoming an institution in many Oxford streets and are even mentioned by estate agents as a reason for moving into a particular house! This year, several party organisers took a break after last year's Jubilee celebrations, but they say they will return next year.

Richard Bradley for the Streets for People Group



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What can you do in a flood plain that benefits the local community and the environment? Ben Haydon, who manages Hogacre Common, explains how you can turn it into an eco-park.

Less than one mile from Carfax as the crow flies, Hogacre Common Eco Park is increasingly becoming part of south and west Oxford's community life.

In 2010 Corpus Christi College offered residents' group Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO) the use of a playing field it no longer used, on condition that the land be used to further the ethos of the group. Located just across the railway line beyond Whitehouse Road, off Abingdon Road, it comprised 14 acres of grassland, scrub woodland, tennis courts and a pavilion.

With particular interest from their tree and wildlife group, LCWO took up the lease for the peppercorn rent of one jar of honey per year. With funding from a mix of grants and income from renewables, I was appointed to manage it and development of the land began in 2011 with a mass tree-planting by local volunteers. The name Hogacre Common was adopted after Hogacre Ditch which borders the site.

Now the Common includes a Forest School site used by local schools; a community orchard growing heritage apples and other fruit; the vegetable growing area of the OxGrow community group; beehives; a wind turbine feeding electricity into the National Grid; and the beginnings of a wildflower meadow. The refurbished pavilion provides indoor facilities including a kitchen; it will soon be heated by a stove burning wood grown on site.

The project involves about 50 regular volunteers but the park is now part of local community life and as many as 400 turn up for special events such as an annual harvest festival and wassailing. A café runs on Sunday afternoons (serving produce grown on site and locally wood-roasted coffee) and an *al fresco* restaurant 'pops-up' during the summer months. The pavilion can be hired for events from children's parties to wedding receptions, while the outdoor spaces are available by arrangement for activities such as organised camps.

Many local people love the opportunity to be part of it. As one family said, "*We love volunteering here ... it's wonderful for the children to get their hands dirty and we keep coming back now to visit the trees that we planted and grow things in the garden*".

Altogether, this is an innovative and exciting way of turning an otherwise little-used piece of land into a local community resource, while promoting a low carbon life.

You can read more at

www.hogacrecommon.org.uk

Volunteers at work on creating planting beds by the Pavilion. The wind turbine generates funds for the project





Transport round-up

Is the need for effective transport planning finally being accepted? Andrew Pritchard reports on the Transport Group's recent work.

Meetings with some local councillors show an increasing realisation that transport matters are key to many developments. The County, for example, is looking at the needs of the Science Arc and Science Vale, and thinking about a possible **rapid transit system** for the eastern arc.

We welcomed the **Oxon Bike Pilot Project**, enabling people to borrow bikes at various Headington locations including the hospitals. We responded to the **Headington Transport Strategy** consultation by saying that it should be part of a wider strategy. We are concerned that the **Westgate** development appears to be fixed upon removing all buses from Queen Street, but without any proper city centre transport strategy, which is still being worked on.

There is as yet no evidence for joined-up thinking between the **Station, Oxpens and Westgate Masterplans**.

A report by AEDAS on moving the station manages to rule out the Oxpens alternative for a proper bus/cycle/rail **transport hub** without giving any details whatsoever of Network Rail's plans for a station rebuilt on the present site. It appears that Department for Transport monies for improving the **Botley Road bridge** are not specifically linked to rail developments. We were very pleased to host Neven Sidor, who worked with Sir Nicholas Grimshaw on Waterloo International and the new Reading Station, and walk round the Oxpens site with him. He was impressed by our ideas, and will speak about stations at the next AGM.

On a more local level, discussions have taken place about the proposed cyclist-friendly roundabout at the Plain.

New members

We are very pleased to welcome **Jonathan Scheele, Ian Green and Hugh Jaeger** to the Group. With 15 members, including transport specialists, we are now in a strong position to influence developments in and around the city.



Oxon Bikes at Thornhill Park and Ride and major sites in Headington aim to reduce the need for short car journeys between the hospitals and university sites. Users can register for just £1 and the first half hour of use is free.

The Museum of Oxford needs you!

The Society played a key role in saving the Museum when it was faced with closure and some of our members are still active as volunteers. The Museum is now on the lookout for **volunteers** willing to become **Heritage Information Assistants, Family Activity Volunteers** and **Schools and Learning Volunteers**. Training is offered.

You can also support the Museum by taking the Town Hall Tour as your £3.50 entrance fee goes to the Museum. This is your chance to see the medieval crypt and the courtroom that featured in the film *A Fish Called Wanda*. The tours take place every other Saturday at 11am.

Contact David Juler, Museum Development Assistant on 01865 252086 or email: museum@oxford.gov.uk



Annual General Meeting Thursday 13 March

We would be delighted to welcome new members to the Executive Committee. If you are interested please contact Vernon Porter for an informal chat. Nominations (which need seconding) and business for the agenda should be sent to Vernon by Wednesday 26 February at:

67 Cunliffe Close, Oxford OX2 7BJ

The Annual Review and provisional agenda will be published in the March edition of *Visions*.

Booking form

February – April ticketed events

Closing date for applications: **16 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
For events on more than one date, please delete any dates you <u>can't</u> do and indicate your preferred date/s		
Oxford Brookes University visit Wednesday 26 February, 2.30pm@£7	
St John's College visit Wednesday 19 March, 2.30pm@£7	
Oxford in the First World War visit Monday 7 April, 9am Tuesday 8 April, 9am@£7	

Note: Tickets are allocated soon after the dosing 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.

Tickets will be posted out in mid-January.

Send this completed form to Alan Hobbs – see right.



Programme calendar 'cut out and keep'

February – April 2014

**ticketed events*

Thurs 13 February 7.30 for 8pm
Oxford archaeology, a talk by Jane Harrison

Weds 26 February* 2.30pm
Oxford Brookes visit

Thurs 13 March 7pm
Pre-AGM talk on station design by
Neven Sidor of Grimshaw Architects

AGM at 8pm

Wednesday 19 March* 2.30pm
St John's College, a visit with William Whyte

Thursday 3 April 7.30 for 8pm
The National Trust, a talk by its
Director General, Helen Ghosh

Monday 7 April* 9am
Tuesday 8 April* 9am
Oxford in the First World War, a visit
with Holly Kilpatrick

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

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 February – April 2014

Open talks – all welcome

No pre-booking, free to members
£4 for non-members

Oxford archaeology

Thursday 13 February

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

Jane Harrison is Tutor in Archaeology at Oxford University's Department of Continuing Education and Project Leader for the East Oxford Archaeology Project. The project has been teaching local people to carry out all aspects of archaeological survey, excavation and background research.

Her talk will concentrate on the major excavations at Bartlemas Leper Hospital and at Minchery Priory, with reference to other city sites and the wider work of the project.

Railways divide cities ... stations connect them

Thursday 13 March

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

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

A pre-AGM talk by **Neven Sidor of Grimshaw Architects**. This international practice has designed many new stations and major station redevelopments in Britain and abroad. Projects include Paddington Phase 1, Waterloo International, London Bridge and recently Reading. Abroad, the Bijlmer ArenA Station in Amsterdam created a new transport hub for trains, metro, buses and taxis.

'For ever, for everyone': The National Trust

Thursday 3 April

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Coffee/tea 7.30pm, talk 8pm

A year into her role as Director-General, **Helen Ghosh** will talk about the way The National Trust adapted to the challenges of the day in the 20th century, while keeping true to its core purpose. She hopes to prompt a discussion with the Society about priorities of the Trust in the 21st century.

Members-only visits

Tickets needed for these events:
bookings by 16 December

Oxford Brookes University

Wednesday 26 February, 2.30pm Tickets: £7

The new John Henry Brookes building – an ambitious investment of £132 million – brings together a library and teaching space, the Students' Union and essential support services for students. Its aim is to be at the heart of the university. There will also be an opportunity to visit the Glass Tank, a new and bold exhibition space for students. The visit will end with tea and biscuits.

Oxford in the First World War

Monday 7 April, 9am

Tuesday 8 April, 9am

Tickets: £7

When the British government declared war on Germany in 1914, the Examination Schools were immediately requisitioned as a military hospital for all ranks – including Germans. The undergraduate population dropped dramatically and the city received an influx of refugees and wounded soldiers. Holly Kilpatrick, a former staff member of the Oxford Preservation Trust, will lead a visit to the Examination Schools and University College to assess the impact of the war on both Town and Gown. The visit will end with tea/coffee in The Vaults Café.

New building at St John's College

Wednesday 19 March, 2.30pm

Tickets: £7

A tour of contemporary architecture at St John's College.

Dr William Whyte, a Fellow of the College, architectural historian, writer and broadcaster, will talk about the objectives and challenges of commissioning modern architecture in this historic setting. The photo shows the Kendrew Quadrangle.



PLEASE NOTE:

Tickets for all the above events will be posted in mid-January



OxClean in schools – and join us for Spring Clean 2014!

Schools are becoming more litter aware and some are outstanding, as the OxClean team reports.

This year our secondary schools shield was won by **Oxford Academy**. They have been consistently dean for the past seven years and even when moving to new buildings kept up a very high standard. They also persuaded the Council to install bins on Sandy Lane West so that passing pupils could use them. Our photo shows Sir Hugo Brunner presenting the award.

The **Schools Campaign** continues, with three of us visiting every school in Oxford throughout the school year.

We encourage the schools not only to be litter free, but just before the annual Spring Clean to focus on litter in their assemblies and class work.

Behind the scenes

We're still hoping to finish getting **'Don't Drop Litter' notices** on the ring road from Heyford Hill to the Wytham turn off and are lobbying for more and better bins with lids. The City Council is trying out bins that crush waste and recyclables, using solar power (you can see an example at the Port Meadow end of Walton Well Road).



Recently we organised a litter pick at Blackbird Leys where we collected 25 bags of rubbish and a golf club! We had marvellous support from local champions Maurice Davies and Paul Brackett.

Spring Clean 2014 – join us!

Our plans are taking shape, with the dates fixed (**Friday 7 and Saturday 8 March**). The Society will be fielding a team to spruce up Blackbird Leys – do join us. We're thrilled that the London and Welsh Rugby team, along with teams from Oxfam and Henman's, are going to focus on the Kassam Stadium area, a no-man's land being used for fly tipping.

Please do join us for this event or register on our OxClean website to litter pick in your own area (you'd be surprised what fun it is!).

Welcome ...

...to **Helen Dodd** who has joined Liz Storrar and me as school visitors, and to **Sadie Page** and **Anneke Bamberg** who have joined the OxClean team.

Rosanne Bostock for the OxClean Team



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