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2009

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Newsletter no 114, November 2009 (ISSN 0308-9959)

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For our 40th Anniversary issue, we offer readers a bumper 12-page newsletter, with just one loose insert. Programme Notes and Booking Form are included on pages 5-7, so cannot be mislaid. This further results in a significant saving in printing costs for the Society – another real benefit.

In our 40th year, what of the future?

Tony Joyce, Chairman

Anniversaries are a time for looking forward and back. On our fortieth birthday, what can we learn from the Society’s past history, and what are the challenges we can expect in the future?

Transport: in September, the President’s masterful address, which we plan to publish early next year, reminded us of the many interventions through which the Society had opposed a series of road plans which would have had a disastrous impact on the historic character and setting of the city. Yet at the same time we were championing the innovative Park-and-Ride system. This dual approach has of necessity to continue, so that today we press for improved access and connectivity by public transport, walking and cycling throughout the city, whilst in the Transform Oxford initiative our opposition to bus interchange at the Plain, and premature proposals for the pedestrianisation of George Street before the problems of Frideswide Square have been resolved, have encouraged the County to rethink its priorities. Our involvement with transport issues throughout the county shows no sign of diminishing in future, as Paul Cullen’s article on the next Local Transport Plan shows.

Building development: in this too, our criticism of initially unsatisfactory proposals has over the years encouraged better subsequent design or more radical re-planning of whole schemes, to the benefit of all. Let us hope that this will prove to be the case for the Bodleian Library’s new depository, now rising, not at Osney Mead with all its attendant disadvantages, but at its welcoming new location in Swindon. When completed this will unlock so many exciting opportunities at the New Bodleian in Broad Street.

At Brookes University too there is now the opportunity to consider a revised design that could aid the long process for the university of settling more comfortably into its Headington surroundings. There are many more exciting developments in the pipeline: at St John’s, as many of us saw during our architecture day there; at Keble, Pembroke, St Antony’s, St Anne’s Colleges amongst others; and of course

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Page 8 offers a new opportunity for anyone mailing the Programme Booking Form to give us their views and comments on the Feedback Forum page, on the reverse. Alternatively, please contact us in any of the usual ways (see page 12) or use the Society’s contact phone no: 07505 756692

at the university's **Radcliffe Observatory Quarter**, about which we look forward to hearing more at the AGM (*Thursday 18th March*).

Implementation of the **West End Area Action Plan** presents a whole range of exciting developments, many of which, like improvements to the Westgate Centre, must await economic recovery.

Housing: whatever the future for the **South East Plan** and its influence on the city and the Central Oxfordshire region, there can be no doubt that attempts to meet Oxford's chronic shortage of housing and the imbalance between homes and jobs, so hotly debated during the **Core Strategy** hearings this summer, will continue to preoccupy us all. The future is sometimes depicted as a straight choice between a conservative resistance to change, leading to stagnation, and progressive expansion that must of itself be beneficial. We surely need to tread a discriminating path between these extremes. Recent house building in the city has tended to be on restricted brown field sites, and as our architecture discussion showed, little of the design has been very memorable. Future developments at Barton and elsewhere will be on a larger scale and offer more scope for exciting new ideas in urban design. This is an area where the Society can develop further study and input.

Partnership working: with local authority funding so tight now and for the foreseeable future, our working partnerships with the **City and County Councils** through **OxClean** and **Streets for People**, reported in later pages, seem likely to continue and indeed grow. We are immensely grateful to those who already give so generously of their time and expertise to these projects. Further possible ventures will need the same level of dedication from amongst our members.

Climate change: the challenges are enormous if Oxford is to lead in meeting demanding new targets to combat global warming. Requiring sustainable design in new building is comparatively easy, if sometimes expensive. But adapting existing housing stock, and particularly historic buildings, to lower carbon footprints is a huge and difficult task.

Chairman's Commentary

Core Strategy. In preparing the **South East Plan**, the Central Oxfordshire area was seen as one of the eight "*Diamonds for Growth*" within the very extensive South East Region. Here, targets were set for economic and housing development. The city could not acceptably meet its share of these within its constrained boundaries, and therefore proposed some modification to the **Green Belt**, principally by an urban extension south of Grenoble Road in South Oxfordshire, and to a lesser extent around the Northern Gateway area. These proposals were incorporated into the SE Plan, and the new **Core Strategy** (which will eventually replace the Oxford Local Plan) was developed on that basis.

Now *South Oxfordshire District Council, the Council for the Protection of Rural England* and *Oxford University* have made a legal challenge to the validity of the SE Plan on the grounds that when the City's proposals were accepted, other options were not fully explored in the required way. Until the court's decision is known, the status of the City's Draft Core Strategy remains in doubt. As a result, the Inspector's report on its public examination, which was due to be published at the end of October, has been held up. It thus remains to be seen what modifications if any may need to be made to the SE Plan and hence the City's Core Strategy, and also what other changes the Inspector may have required to the latter, following his analysis of its public examination.

A Regeneration Framework for Oxford to 2026. After considerable revision, this City Council document has now been adopted (*see the City's website or enquire for a printed copy at the Town Hall*). It contains strong evidence which shows how areas of extreme deprivation exist alongside those 'world class' characteristics which bolster the city's international reputation. Overall, the picture is often only average or below. The Framework seeks to encourage better partnership working between the various agencies which could transform these deprived areas, extend opportunities through improved education and skills training, and raise aspirations generally. It is hoped that by defining the problems more clearly, external funding will be attracted to assist.

At the same time, the County Council has published for consultation its **Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2013**. (See the County's website or enquire at County Hall.) When adopted, this should give further impetus to improving young people's prospects in their most formative years.

Tony Joyce, Chairman

Review of Bus Services

The County Council has begun its periodic review of all the bus services that it supports financially within the Oxford City area. Most of the public service contracts expire in June 2010, and re-tendering starts early in the New Year. Some heavily used routes are provided entirely commercially by the bus companies, or are funded by other bodies such as **Brookes University** or **Oxford Radcliffe NHS Trust**; others, though viable during weekdays, need subsidising for evenings and weekends. Some will run only with full subsidy.

We should of course like to have as full, frequent and continuous a network as possible, but with the current pressure on County Council budgets, there is anxiety that not even all the existing subsidised services can be maintained.

Full details of the affected services are available in the November agendas of Area Committees (*copies can be readily obtained by calling in to the Town Hall*) and some information should be posted at relevant bus stops and in buses.

Members are urged to check their local services and send their comments direct to: **Integrated Transport Unit, Oxfordshire County Council, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, OX1 1NE or e-mail john.wood@oxfordshire.gov.uk**

Tony Joyce, Chairman

Transport Notes

People living in **Blackbird Leys, Cowley** or along the **Cowley Road corridor** will have the luxury of a bus service on Christmas Day for the first time this year. As 25 December falls on a Friday, there will be many people attending mosques as well as church.

Departures from Blackbird Leys will start at 0935 and then hourly to 1735; from the city centre at 1010 until 1810. There will be a mid-day gap – no departures at 1335 or 1310 respectively. A flat fare of £2.50 will be charged for any distance and the usual concessions will apply. *Stagecoach* will run this as an experiment and, if successful, it could mean more routes operating on Christmas Day in the future.

Maybe *Oxford Bus Company* will follow suit, although they have produced their own Christmas present: prices of their smart card, **'The Key'**, have been reduced by 10-15%, depending on the period and area of validity. This should improve the already wide use of this convenient payment system.

The use of electric cars and vans should be enhanced given the news that Oxford is to be one of the first cities to get a network of battery-charging points, within 2 years. Although this is to be welcomed, care must be taken to avoid 'street clutter' in sensitive areas.

The railways have provided more good news recently: electrification to Oxford as part of the *Great Western Main Line* scheme will mean cleaner and quieter trains, as well as a much-reduced carbon footprint. Even more benefit would be achieved if the wires were extended to Coventry and if Reading-Basingstoke was included, so that freight trains from Southampton Docks to the Midlands and beyond could be electrically hauled – not to mention Cross Country passenger trains, between Manchester and Bournemouth.

Network Rail's desire for extra platforms at Oxford station poses a dilemma – either to rebuild on the present site, which would mean demolition of the station building and the Youth Hostel, or to move to the Oxpens site as proposed by the County Council's consultants, *Arup*, some years ago. The first option would also mean severe disruption to services during construction as well as the demolitions.

And, of course, electrification and a new station are in addition to the *Cotswold Line* double-tracking and the prospect of a new London route via Bicester.

David Townsend, Transport Secretary

Report from the Planning Sub-Committee

Update on applications mentioned in July (issue 113): **Oriel College's** appeal against refusal of their application to build in the **Bartlemas Conservation Area** was *dismissed*, but a further revised plan for a small house at **21 Wolvercote Green** has been *permitted*. A second proposal to demolish **26 Barton Village Road** was *withdrawn*: two years ago this had been proposed and refused. *Permission* came for flats behind **Cherwell Drive** and **Marston Road**, and for most of the proposals at **Ruskin College in Dunstan Road**. **Brookes University** was *refused permission* to build its proposed large new Library and Student Centre, and this is now under further consideration. Likewise **Banners** for **Gypsy Lane** and at **Headington Hill Hall**, to advertise Brookes University, were *refused* on the grounds that 'their overlarge, dominant and intrusive nature would be detrimental to the street scene and the parkland setting, and would neither preserve nor enhance the Conservation Area'. Several applications are still *pending*: Peers School's new **Academy Buildings** in **Littlemore**; alterations to **190 Ifley Road** and development behind **St Aldates**. Discussions are ongoing over new Oxford University buildings in the **Radcliffe Observatory Quarter** and a new quadrangle for **Keble College**. Alterations proposed at **184 Woodstock Road** and at **Colthorn Farm** in **Old Marston** have been *withdrawn*, and so has a request for retrospective planning permission for a large rear extension to **229 Cowley Road**, to house 13 students.

In *July* we considered an application to subdivide the garden of **31 Tawney Street** for a second 3-bed house, with car parking space; a similar application was made at **169 The Slade**, but both were *refused* on grounds of lack of amenity space. Conversion of a pub to flats was proposed at **12 New Road**, with alterations to the façade.

Fourteen of the *August* applications merited letters of objection. One was for a giant Observation Wheel in **Worcester Street Car Park**. This was *withdrawn*, unsurprisingly as (at about 40m high) it was likely to be visible from Port Meadow, it would cause disturbance, and would infringe some privacy. Alterations to **15 Belbroughton Road** were also pro-

posed, including extensions to side, rear, garage and roof, and these were *permitted*. At **68 Woodstock Road (St Antony's College)** an imaginatively designed library building for the Middle Eastern Studies Centre, which had gained *conditioned permission* a year ago, was *confirmed*. A remarkable feature is its curved fibre-glass roof. **184 Woodstock Road** was threatened with demolition to make way for a new building containing seven flats but this application was *withdrawn* a few months later.

In *September*, it was proposed that **No 1 Upland Park Road** should be demolished and be replaced by a terrace of four houses each with 3 bedrooms and a study, but there was not enough space to provide parking spaces for them, and the application was *refused* in October. In **Old Marston, 4 Mill Lane** was again targeted for demolition to make way for three 3-bed houses, in a 'cottagey' style not much in keeping with this corner of stately old stone houses. Demolition was also proposed for **Highbank Bungalow, 8 Headley Way**, to make way for 9 dwellings, (4 with 3 bedrooms, three with 2, and two with 1). The narrow access would be awkward; there would be little or no parking space, and tiny gardens. The loss of trees and a pleasant bungalow and garden would be regrettable. A proposal to extend **2 Cherwell Drive** and convert to 4 'duplex' flats with spiral staircases was *approved*.

In *October* came a complex proposal to convert what was once Blackwell's Music Shop, and latterly a restaurant, at **28 Holywell Street**, into a Graduate Learning Centre for Wadham College, whose quad is just behind it. Alterations and extensions, outside staircases and pergolas, and reinstatement of bookcases, would make a unique space. However a screen proposed across the entire upper façade, covering the windows, does seem doubtful and inconvenient. Another proposal was to demolish **46 Hythe Bridge Street** and erect a 4-storey building for 9 flats. This is a repeat of an application which had been *refused*, as was this soon after. The terrace deserves to be treasured as an attractive whole in a charming riverside situation.

Gillian Argyle, Mark Barrington Ward, Kate Joyce,
Chris Rayson, Peter Thompson, David Townsend

PROGRAMME CALENDAR

Saturday 23 January, 2.15 for 2.30 pm – now fully booked
Visit to Trinity College, Oxford

Wednesday 10 February 8 pm
Crumbling Facades – threats to the historic stonework of Oxford

Thursday 25 February, 8 pm
Oxford Figures

Saturday 13 March, 2 pm or Monday 26 April, 6 pm
Industrial Oxford walk

Thursday 18 March, 7 pm
AGM, preceded by a talk on the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter

Saturday 27 March, 10 am
Visit to Kellogg College, Oxford

Saturday 17 April, 2.30 pm or Wednesday 21 April, 6 pm
Jericho walk

Thursday 22 April, 8 pm
The Royal Society, Wadham College and the Experimental Scientific Tradition, 1660 onwards

DIARY DATE

Wednesday 26 May

Talk by *Professor Marcus du Sautoy*, Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. A mathematician, author and broadcaster, his four-part series on the history of maths was televised recently.

An appeal for help at speaker meetings (just 7 or 8 per year)

We are urgently looking for someone (or perhaps friends, working together) to co-ordinate the arrangements, and for members to help with refreshments on the night.

Contact Sheila Glazebrook, tel 01865 310488 or e-mail sglazebrook@ntlworld.com

Programme: January – April 2010

PUBLIC TALKS: all welcome, no pre-booking, members free, non-members £4

Wednesday 10 February, 8 pm:

Crumbling Facades – threats to the historic stonework of Oxford

Oxford buildings are predominantly built of limestone, which often deteriorates over the years. *Heather Viles*, Professor of Heritage Conservation at the University of Oxford, will describe the nature of Oxford stone and how it has been affected by coal smoke, traffic pollution and presently, global changes.

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street
Coffee 7.30 pm, talk 8 pm

Thursday 25 February, 8 pm:

Oxford Figures

What do Lewis Carroll, Florence Nightingale, Christopher Wren and Geoffrey Chaucer have in common? They were all – amongst other things – mathematicians. *Robin Wilson*, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics at the Open University and a former Fellow of Keble College, explores the fascinating mathematical history of these well known names, as well as other links they share in 'Oxford Figures'.

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street
Coffee 7.30 pm, talk 8 pm

Thursday 22 April, 8 pm:

The Royal Society, Wadham College and the Experimental Scientific Tradition, 1660 onwards

Professor Allan Chapman is a member of Wadham College, a writer and a broadcaster; he has also written several books on the history of astronomy. As the Royal Society celebrates three hundred and fifty years of existence, Professor Chapman will discuss the origins of the Society in Oxford – and at Wadham, in particular – and its continuing relevance to this day.

New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Coffee 7.30 pm, talk 8pm

**MEMBERS ONLY VISITS AND WALKS:
tickets required, bookings by 9 December**

Saturday 23 January, 2.15 pm for 2.30 pm:

Visit to Trinity College, Oxford

This event is now fully booked

Saturday 13 March, 2 pm or Monday 26 April, 6 pm:

Industrial Oxford walk

If Oxford is most famous for its university, and its architecture and history, it also has many other fascinating faces. *Liz Woolley*, a writer and guide on the city of Oxford, will lead a walk to discover and explore some of the buildings that remind us of the city's long and largely forgotten industrial past. Allow up to 2 hrs.

Tickets: £4

Saturday 27 March, 10 am:

Visit to Kellogg College

Professor Malcolm Aairs, a former Vice-President and Emeritus Fellow of Kellogg College, will talk on the history and architecture of the college, the principal base for part-time and adult students at Oxford University, and at the forefront in Oxford of the growing national emphasis on life-long learning. The talk will then be followed by a tour of Kellogg.

Tickets: £7

Saturday 17 April, 2.30 pm or Wednesday 21 April, 6 pm:

Jericho walk

Mark Davies, a writer and guide on the city of Oxford, will lead a walk through the Victorian suburb of Jericho, highlighting its rich literary and artistic associations as well as its canal – from Thomas Coombe and the Oxford University Press to the present controversy over the Jericho Boatyard. Allow up to 90 minutes.

Tickets: £4

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 18 March, 7 pm:

Annual General Meeting of the Oxford Civic Society

The AGM will be preceded by a talk on the University of Oxford and plans for the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter by *Jennifer Wood*, Director of Estates, Oxford University. She will discuss the extensive research and planning undertaken by the University to transform the old Radcliffe Infirmary site and then explain the objectives behind this major university development.

Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street

Coffee 6.30 pm, talk 7 pm and AGM 8pm

**Compiled by Programme Group members
Michael Brown, Martin Cuss, Keith Dyke, Alan Hobbs
and Alastair Lack (Convenor)**

**Contact for bookings/tickets only:
Alan Hobbs, 66 Southfield Road, Oxford OX4 1PA
tel/answerphone 01865 248105**

What's different?

Pages 5-8 are designed to be easily separated from the rest of your newsletter, for those who like to pin programme details to a notice-board for instance. They replace the various inserts that have, in the past, been enclosed within your newsletter – this saves the Society a significant sum in the cost of print production.

To book tickets, where required, simply detach the Booking Form on page 7 and submit this in the usual way. We would encourage you to make any comments on the new programme pages, or anything else within this issue, on the reverse of your Booking Form before mailing it to Alan Hobbs. *(Editor)*



The report from the consultant expert to the Steering Group on the future of the Museum is currently undergoing consideration for the City's 2010-2011 Budget process. Meanwhile, the Society is proud of its volunteer force and special relationship with the Museum.

We urge anyone with even an occasional half-day to spare to please contact *Vanessa Lea, Museum Operations Officer, Museum of Oxford, St Aldates, OX1 1DZ* (tel 01865 252086)

And we have pleasure in drawing readers' attention to some of the exciting events in the Museum's programme:

24 October – 28 November

In the Footsteps of Henry Taunt

There is still time to see this fascinating exhibition of traditional photographs by a local Victorian photographer.

Friday 27 Nov, 5 – 8 pm

Christmas Light night

Staff in period costume for a special late night opening to celebrate the switching on of the city's night lights.

Tuesday 1 Dec, 7 – 9 pm

1009 : The Sacking of Oxford

A talk by local historian **Roger Jenking** on the burning of Anglo-Saxon Oxford by the Vikings. **(Old Library, Town Hall - free)**

Friday 4 Dec, 10 am – 2 pm

Finds Surgery

Take your archaeological finds along to the Museum to be identified and recorded by Oxfordshire's Finds Liaison Officer, **Anni Byard**.

**museumofoxford.org.uk
tel 01865 252086**



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BOOKING FORM FOR MEMBERS – JANUARY-APRIL 2010

Closing date for applications: **9 December**

We shall allocate tickets shortly after the closing date

If you miss the closing date it is always worth asking later whether places remain

Notes:

1. A ballot will be held if necessary
2. One cheque for each event, and one s.a.e. for all tickets please
3. If applying for two tickets, give name of second member
4. Your name, address, telephone and email address are all vital contact details for us – please print them clearly, below
5. Cheques are banked three weeks after ticket issue; after that, refunds cannot be given

Member's name & address

..... Telephone

Email

EVENT: * Where two dates are offered, please indicate if you can accept the second date. If not, please delete.	Number of tickets	Amount enclosed
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<i>Industrial Oxford walk</i>		
<i>Either</i> * Saturday 13 March, 2 pm at £4	
<i>Or</i> * Monday 26 April, 6 pm at £4	

<i>Visit to Kellogg College</i>		
Saturday 27 March, 10 am at £7	

<i>Jericho walk</i>		
<i>Either</i> * Saturday 17 April, 2.30 pm at £4	
<i>Or</i> * Wednesday 21 April, 6pm at £4	

Completed form to Alan Hobbs, 66 Southfield Road, Oxford, OX4 1PA [queries 01865-248105]

Please remember to enclose * a cheque for each event * one stamped, self-addressed envelope for tickets



FEEDBACK FORUM

note your comments here for return to us by post, or email newsletter@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk

We would welcome your views on any aspect of this newsletter and its contents, but particularly on the inclusion of the Programme Notes and Booking Form within the main body of the issue rather than as separate inserts. This is highly cost-effective for the Society, and serves well those members who choose to receive their newsletter by email. Do please let us know how you feel about this new presentation.

More specifically, do you find the yellow programme card redundant as a printed enclosure, given the new style programme pages and the summarised calendar?

Local Transport Plan 3 An opportunity to help frame County Transport Programmes

Oxfordshire County Council has begun preparation of its Local Transport Plan, covering the spending period 2011 to 2016 (although it will be determining policies for the next twenty years). The Society's Travel Behaviour Group met recently to begin the task of preparing a submission to the County Council, and emerging topics included:

- (1) Improving transport connectivity:** reconnecting services across the centre, developing the Park & Ride sites as travel 'hubs', more orbital bus services and better bus services and stops, better ticketing arrangements;
- (2) Better use of rail:** including getting to/from the trains and facilities at stations
- (3) Enabling more people to choose to walk or cycle for some of their journeys**
- (4) Enforcement of 20mph limits**
- (5) Road projects to bring relief to communities:** for example, better links to the JR Hospital; a proper A34/A40 link by-passing the Wolvercote roundabout; redesign of Frideswide Square – bringing it forward in the programme
- (6) Improvements to air quality**
- (7) Fewer coaches in the city**

In recent months, we have produced several documents of relevance: the *Bus Connectivity* report, *'The Bus Stops Here'*, and an earlier report on *Signage* and the clutter it can cause. All are available on our website oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk – see *Travel*, and *Publications* pages.

If you feel there are other matters about which the Society should express a view, do please let us know. Also, do respond personally to the County's consultation: visit the County's website oxfordshire.gov.uk for details– enter 'Local Transport Plan 3' into the 'Search' box once in the site. Alternatively write to **Local Transport Plan Team, Oxfordshire County Council, Speedwell House, Speedwell Street, Oxford OX1 1NE.**

Paul Cullen, Convenor, Travel Behaviour Group

A cleaner city?

At last, we see some progress. Alistair Ferrier's appointment as City Centre Manager is beginning to take effect: already we see more litterbins, later refuse collection in Cornmarket, and stronger enforcement measures against the dropping of litter, gum and cigarette ends. A **Cleaner Greener Oxford** campaign was launched on November 2nd.

But outside the centre there is still less progress. **OxClean** is co-ordinating a third annual **Spring Clean on Friday 5 & Saturday 6 March 2010** across the whole city, and we have raised funds to offer up to 5 free Streetmaster litterpickers to groups registering early. So if you have an area nearby which could do with a cleanup, please register as soon as possible at oxclean.org.uk for a two-hour litterpick over that weekend.

We are trying this year to involve more businesses and have secured a very welcome pledge from **McDonald's** to carry out a litterpick in the vicinity of each of their three Oxford restaurants – volunteers will be offered a free meal to round off their two-hour litter pick. **McDonald's** already sponsor a street litter picker to help the City.

Did you know that putting your domestic rubbish into a public litterbin (instead of your own wheelie bin) counts as fly tipping? Fixed penalties for this and other litter offences stand at £80. Report flytipping via the City's website (and other nuisances, such as abandoned bicycles); email flytipping@oxford.gov.uk or tel 01865 252070.



OxClean is trying to get the bypass cleared of litter – flytipped furniture, builders waste, bits of old cars and rubbish blown into hedges. Responsibility is shared between 4 districts, the County and the Highways Agency. The co-ordination of their various activities seems impossible, eg grass gets cut before litter is removed causing shredded litter to be strewn around. We continue to remind them of the mess.



A very successful clean-up of the rivers in Oxford took place on October 10th, organised by the **River Us-**

ers Group with help from OxClean, the City Council and the Environment Agency. A wide area was covered, reclaiming 55 sacks of rubbish and sundry large items; we hope to repeat this exercise in the Spring.

Ros Weatherall, Environment Secretary & Chair, OxClean Steering Group

Oxford Streets for People

We announced in March (*issue 112*) that Oxford City Council had asked the Civic Society to organise the Streets for People (SfP) programme this year. Its main purpose is to remind people that streets are valuable social spaces with many functions, not just for through traffic. A further aim is to influence the planning authorities in their management and design of the 'street scene'.

The focus of the programme in 2009 was the weekend of 19 & 20 September when a number of community groups 'opened' their streets for residents' parties. We were very pleased with the outcome – 13 groups held events, which exceeded our expectations. The feedback was excellent:



"In my experience street parties are one of the most effective ways to bring communities together."

"It was a fantastic evening, with about 200 people sitting on chairs, floor cushions and bits of carpet. People seemed to love the idea that for one night the streets belonged to them."

"This was our eighth party. Residents really know each other now and mix so well at street parties, without any organised events. This also helps neighbours come together and jointly tackle community issues."

The Society not only promoted and co-ordinated the 'Streets' programme but also took part, launching a series of seven short city centre walks, one each day during the lunch period. These 'Walks & Talks' were designed to open people's eyes to some of the hidden features of our city. All routes are published on our website and we plan to add others, beyond the city centre.

SfP fits well with the Society's broader objectives and so, given this year's success, we intend to in-

corporate SfP as an annual feature. So, if you want to do something to help bring your community together, think about a street party and start planning soon. For more details see our website oxstreets.org.uk

Richard Bradley, Project Co-ordinator

Ten Years of Oxfordshire Blue Plaques

Few counties are so fortunate as to enjoy their own Blue Plaques scheme founded to encourage and facilitate proposals, while maintaining a uniform level of award. In this first decade more than 50 plaques have been awarded to writers, scholars, artists, doctors, scientists, engineers, manufacturers, builders, lawyers, priests, soldiers, farmers and philanthropists. 6 have been for places and events; 22 erected out in the county, 28 in the city.

We are indebted to Sir Hugo Brunner and Edwin Townsend-Coles who were inspired to set about founding the Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board in October 1999, the Oxford Civic Society for taking pride in the enterprise and supporting running costs, all those who are dedicated to the implementation of proposals, and all the individual owners of buildings, donors and enthusiasts whose support is fundamental to success.

Our new Chairman, Dr Kate Tiller, is enjoying her first year at the helm. In April, she presided over the double unveiling by the Rt Hon David Cameron MP of plaques to the blanket manufacturers Charles Early (1824-1912) and William Smith (1815-75) in Witney.

In November, Dr Tiller saw the fiftieth Blue Plaque erected which was for William Richard Morfill (1834-1909), First Professor of Russian and Slavonic Languages, at 42 Park Town. Other commemorations in 2009 were at 11 Crick Road for J S Haldane (1860-1936) whose work on gases saved many lives; at Headington House for Sir Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997), historian of ideas; for Revd Canon John Stansfeld (1854-1939), parish priest and doctor, at the old Rectory, St Ebbe's; for Janet Heatley Blunt (1859-1950), folk song and morris dance collector, at Le Hall Place, Adder-

bury; for **Judge Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780)**, at Wallingford Town Hall.

New proposals are always welcome. Contact **Eda Forbes** at 01865 552763 or through the website, oxfordshireblueplaques.org.uk

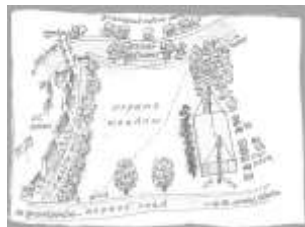
**Eda Forbes, Secretary,
Oxfordshire Blue Plaques Board**

Saving Oxpens Meadow

A rather surprising number of Oxford residents don't know about Oxpens Meadow – a charming open space enjoyed by many city workers, local residents and Further Education College students. This stretch of river meadow is next to the Ice Rink on Oxpens Road; its eastern border is Castle Mill Stream, and its southern the Thames.

In 1923 the City Council paid £9,500 to Christ Church for the meadow for '*purposes of public walks and pleasure grounds*' and for the construction of the new Oxpens Road. Originally the land

comprised 16 acres (or 6.47 hectares) but most of this has since been developed for the FE College, a car and coach park, the Ice



Rink and other more temporary usage. Do you remember the Air Raid shelters, the coal dump, the rubbish dump or lairage? If so, please contact **Rosemary Fennell, tel 01865 251607**.

The Council maintained open space we now enjoy covers 5 acres (or 2.02 hectares) and **SENDRA** (*St Ebbes New Development Residents' Association*) has formally applied for this to be protected as a Town Green, using the 2006 Commons Act. Help and support comes from many Oxford residents and workers, as well as from the earlier Town Green applicants at Trap Grounds and Warneford Meadow. Sadly, the City Council is opposing our application and its West End Area Action Plan envisages further development on almost half the meadow.

Friends of Oxpens Meadow (FOM) has been set up to campaign for the proposed Town Green

and, alongside SENDRA, supports just about everything in the City's West End Action Plan - but not building on this river meadow. With more housing and workplaces being planned, surely a Town Green is more, not less important? In a survey we conducted in June, over 200 FE college students were counted, using the meadow once or twice a week for an average 40 minute period and a further 100 people were registered as 'regulars' for walking, 'chilling out', fishing and physical exercise. Just what the City fathers intended back in 1923!

FOM is campaigning for moral and financial support. The legal support needed is costly: at least £20,000 has to be found so that the case for a Town Green can be properly argued through when the case reaches the County Council's Planning and Regulation Committee in 2010.

So please help: contact **Margaret Maden, 12 Dale Close, Oxford OX1 1TU (Chair, FOM)**; **Rosemary Fennell, 50 Trinity Street, OX1 1TY (Chair, SENDRA)**; email info@oxpensmeadow.org or visit oxpensmeadow.org Thank you.

Margaret Maden, Chair (FOM)

"The Changing Faces of Summertown and Cutteslowe: Book Two"

by Ann Spokes Symonds with Chris Nichols

Long-standing residents and newcomers to Oxford might enjoy this well-illustrated history of a thriving residential and business community. Published in March 2009, the book details the many changes to have taken place since the area was first developed, and more particularly since **Julie Kennedy** published Book One in 1995. Chapters include *The Early Years, Transport and Traffic, Celebrations* and *School Groups*.

Editor's note: Co-author and OCS founder member **Ann Spokes Symonds** is a local historian who has written five other books in this series.

Copies (price £9.95 plus £1.50 post and packing) can be obtained from **Robert Boyd Publications** (to whom cheques should be made payable) at **260 Colwell Drive, Witney, Oxon OX28 5LW**. There are over 60 titles in "*The Changing Faces ..*" series and more are planned.

Cards available in time for Christmas

Sales of this year's cards have gone well, but Cards Group would like to make sure they achieve their break-even point before the end of the year and need just £90 of further sales to do so.

A reminder, then, that there is still time for readers to purchase in time for Christmas and also for corporate members to request their details to be over-printed.

Christmas cards:



"Cornmarket"



"Sheldonian Theatre"

As well as Christmas cards, stocks of postcards and notelets are available for personal use or as charming small gifts – these can be purchased in ribbon-wrapped gift packs.

Postcards and/or Notelets:

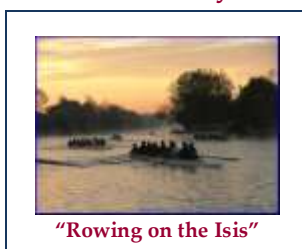


"Blossom on the High"



"Botanic Gardens"

Postcard only:



"Rowing on the Isis"

The Cards page of oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk carries an Order Form and more details of each of the cards in this year's range

For Christmas orders, all enquiries should be made *as soon as possible* to Oxford Civic Society (Cards Group), "Yarnells", Yarnells Hill, OX2 9BG (tel 01865 247669) or email sales@oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk (Additional stocks of cards are usually available for sale at the Society's meetings.)

Stuart White, Convenor, Cards Group

A NOTE TO READERS: printed copies of all materials posted to our website are available on request from the Hon Secretary on receipt of a stamped, addressed envelope of appropriate size. *(Editor)*

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