

Oxford Pedestrians Association

NEWSLETTER NO. ~~16~~ 17 SEPT/OCT 1997 ✓

Welcome to issue no. 17 of OxPA's Newsletter! Apologies for its lateness, due to your Newsletter Editor having injured her elbow whilst on holiday, which makes typing painful. Your Newsletter Editor has also developed a new awareness of how narrow pavements are - there is nothing like having a wounded limb to protect to draw ones attention to how we are all pushing past each other a lot of the time.

Despite the fact that some of us have been away for part of the past couple of months, it has been a busy time for OxPA.

1) I hope you have all sent photographs and/or descriptions of the best/worst pavements in your areas to the National Pedestrians Association, so that they can judge the pavements throughout the country. If you have not done so yet, please consider doing so. Pavements are judged in terms of width, flatness, state of repair, obstructions and accessibility.

2) An anonymous citizen of Oxford sent me a wonderful booklet full of pictures of cars parked on pavements everywhere in our city, with a very funny written commentary. I photocopied it and sent copies to the police, traffic engineers, political group leaders, and gave two copies to Jenny, one for OxPA, and one to send to Ben Plowden. If anyone knows who the creator of the document may be, please pass on the grateful thanks of OxPA's Newsletter Editor. If anyone would like a copy of it, please contact me (no. at end of Newsletter).

3) The City Cycles Sub-Committee is now officially called the **City Pedestrians and Cycles Sub-Committee**. Thanks to OxPA's campaigning we now have a voice, albeit shared, like our footpaths. As every item relating to pedestrians came up for discussion at the September meeting Jenny kept asking, "How are you going to do that without a Pedestrian Officer?" Such issues included the inadequate time allowed to pedestrians crossing at traffic lights, and the walking routes from the bus/railway station to the centre of town. At last John Tanner said he would suggest that Highways and Traffic include a bid for a Pedestrian Officer in their next budget. Other councillors present (Hollingsworth, Sanders and Keen) did not support this idea, but let us hope it goes ahead anyway.

4) **LMS Station Site update.** Having discovered that if the University buys the site they will not be proposing a development that will generate traffic, yet will still be expected to pay for both the new highway and the expensive relocation of the Grade II* Listed LMS building, we are querying the basis of the road plan in the first place. At the same time rumour has it that English Heritage may now not approve the removal of the unique LMS building onto another site. Your Newsletter Editor wrote to Mr Wafic Said suggesting he donate to the people of Oxford the restoration of the LMS building and a pedestrian route on the site accessing the station.

5) **Stalls.** These are the way we go out to the general public, and how we get new members and raise the profile of pedestrian issues. They are good fun and an excellent way of meeting people. Margaret has been brilliant at doing our stalls, donating and selling marmalade and cakes, and deserves an appreciative mention at this point. Please, all our members, come and help at our next stalls, which are: **October 18th, the Oxfam Fair in the Town Hall; November 29th, CND in Wesley Memorial Hall, New Inn Hall Street; and on December 13th the Green Fair in the Town Hall.** If you can help, or would like to bake a cake or anything, please contact Jenny (no. at end of Newsletter).

6) **Wounded pedestrians.** Margaret has injured her elbow, Delia has injured her wrist, and Jenny has damaged her hip. Jenny made the important personal observation that when one is using a stick on pavements the minutiae of paving slabs and so on is more significant. Bumps, unevenness, and awkwardly placed kerbs, as well as obstructions which one has to get round, become much more of a problem if the walker is slow or not quite fit.

7) **Traffic Working Group.** Corinne goes and regularly feeds our ideas to officers. Please ring her if you want to know the details of what she is doing (no. at end of Newsletter).

8) **Buses.** There has recently been more attention paid to the speed buses go at whenever the driver sees an empty street ahead. This has led to a few accidents and casualties. If any of you see a bus doing anything stupid, write down the time and the place, and the number of the bus or the direction it is going in, and send to: **Philip Kirk, Oxford City Bus Company, Cowley Road.**

9) **Oxford Transport Strategy Public Enquiry** is beginning on January 27th 1998, and will run for three weeks. Patrick will be speaking on behalf of OxPA. He spoke for OxPA at the **Structure Plan Enquiry**, and the report of the panel following that takes into account several of OxPA's comments.

10) **The National Pedestrians Association** is applying to the Lottery for funding to offer two and a half new jobs. These new workers would help local groups, so OxPA may benefit. Ben Plowden is raising the profile of pedestrians everywhere nationally, writing articles and speaking.

11) The foliage obstructing Gipsy Lane has been cut back due to Margaret's powers of persuasion. It is reported that Farekh Hamid, who is in charge of this, has had to get extra help in his office as a result of all the extra work.

12) The motion asking the County to install pedestrian crossings on the unofficial inner ring road, especially in front of Worcester College, is to be resubmitted for consideration by County Officers and Councillors. Although last time they agreed it was 'dangerous', nothing has been done to make that and other junctions safer for walkers. It will be debated early in the new year, and we hope that a representative of OxPA will come and address the relevant meeting on the subject. If you have an interest in seeing democracy in action, please volunteer, or just come and watch/listen. Local government can be a truly eye-opening experience.

13) At our next meeting we will be discussing the Government draft document, '**Developing An Integrated Transport Policy.**' We need to formulate our response. If you would like copies of the document, please ring Ruth Chapman at the Dept of the Environment, on 0171 271 5631.

Our next two meetings are on October 20th and November 17th, at 7.30pm, in the Town Hall. Everybody is welcome, so please come, and bring a friend. We look forward to seeing you there.

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