

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO 81

MAY/JUNE 2008

Welcome to Issue no.81 of OxPA's Newsletter! Winter has given way to early summer, the puddles have dried up, and it is walking weather for all again. Walk your way from misery into joy, from sickness into health, and from tedium into interest and enthusiasm.

1) Please join our new Lord Mayor Councillor Susanna Pressel, member of OxPA, at her Lord Mayor's parade, which will take place on Bank Holiday Monday 26 May and will be a celebration of Oxford Past and Present. The parade will depart from Radcliffe Square at 11.30am. It will then travel down Catte Street, Cornmarket Street, St Aldate's Abingdon Road and into Hinksey Park. Walking and cycling will be prominent themes of the Parade, with the Lord Mayor choosing to travel in a cycle rickshaw, rather than the customary open top bus. So, come and celebrate our streets on this public occasion. **The Lord Mayor's Picnic will take place at Hinksey Park from 12 to 6pm.**

Please note – this will replace OxPA's usual monthly meeting – so **there will be no OxPA meeting at the Town Hall on Tuesday 27th May.**

2) We had a most interesting presentation in March from the City Council's Countryside Officer, Anthony Roberts. Anthony has worked for Oxford since the 1980's and his enthusiasm for his work was evident throughout his presentation. Using colour slides that showed Oxford's major open spaces today and in the past, he described the many issues faced in managing precious environments that are constantly being challenged by our mostly urban environment and lifestyles. Anthony dealt mostly with our larger open spaces, and of course OxPA's interest is as much in those small corners of the city where one can sit awhile as in the great recreational spaces such as Port Meadow.

The Countryside Service offers a full programme of events, such as hedge laying at Seacourt, from spring through to autumn; these are set out in a leaflet, **'Countryside Events' available at the Town Hall and other City Council buildings. Phone 08000 521455 for a copy.** As well as its full time team of Rangers, it is assisted by the Oxford Volunteer Rangers who meet regularly to carry out practical tasks on the City's Nature Parks. **If you or someone you know would like to join in, phone the above number or e-mail parks@oxford.gov.uk for more information.**

3) Capital Shopping's major commercial development of Oxford City Centre looks to have the go-ahead to demolish Abbey Place housing, which means nothing now stands in the way of the multi-million pound proposal. This will mean increased motorised traffic and air pollution on Botley and Abingdon Roads, and in the city centre. However, since this is an effect that the majority of Oxford residents are willing to support, watch the bulldozers roll in and the tremendous project begin!

4) Did you walk to work on 24th April? Being an OxPA member you probably did. As mentioned in our last Newsletter, 24th April was **National Walk to Work Day**. Did you make the effort? Some of us did, but we didn't notice huge extra numbers of people going about on their feet. Encourage others to follow your excellent example, and take a neighbour or friend with you. Good for the City – and good for you!

5) The High is one of the City's real gems. It is becoming better thanks to the success of the County's camera in deterring private motorists from driving through; but is still burdened with buses and coaches. The County Council has repaved the eastern and western ends of the High, and are intending to do something about the middle, arguably the most sensitive space. But their funds have been reduced and OxPA feels this should not deter the organisations involved from pursuing other funds to deliver a quality space for the enjoyment of residents, students, workers, shoppers, visitors and tourists. **Do you have views about what should happen to make the High a better place? If so, please contact Corinne via info@oxpa.org.uk or on Oxford 779663.**

6) The traffic lights at the junction of New Road and Park End Street have been replaced by a mini-roundabout, meant to be a temporary measure during repairs to the Castle Mound; however the County might make it permanent as it 'facilitates traffic flow' (pedestrians being traffic too, of course). But roundabouts, especially accompanied by pedestrian deterrent fencing as this one is, are obstructive to walkers on this heavily-used walking route. If you are concerned, please contact Deborah on Deborah.glasswoodin@oxfordshire.gov.uk, or by ringing her on 248073.

There will be no OxPA meeting in May. The next is on Tuesday June 24th : meet at 7pm on the Town Hall steps for an evening enjoying one of the walks from OxPA's new book of Oxford walks. Please come, everybody is welcome!

Contact Numbers

Corinne Grimley-Evans (Secretary)779663

Ray Jones (Membership Secretary and Treasurer)865070

Michaela Philbin (Stalls).....201541

Sushila Dhall (Newsletter Editor).....553415

Paul Cullen (Acting Chair)426805

National Pedestrians Association (Living Streets).....0207 820 1010