



Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

May 2013

Welcome to Newsletter 107

OxPA is proud to commemorate our much missed late Chairman Paul Cullen by donating a bench in his memory in Walton Street. It has been installed, as he wanted, outside OUP next to the bus stop and telephone kiosk. His name and dates are engraved on the back bar alongside the words *Oxford Pedestrians Association*. We have paid for the purchase and installation of the bench, and the City Council will undertake responsibility for repairs and upkeep in the future. Here it is in all its glory:



Pedestrian Safety, Urban Space and Health

The conclusions of this recent report by the *International Transport Forum* will be welcomed by all of us involved in promoting active and sustainable travel. The report acknowledges that walking is still "the neglected transport mode" and explores in detail the causes of this neglect. It makes far-reaching recommendations for creating a "more walkable" environment with all the benefits this would bring. To read a summary of the key messages from this study, visit our website www.oxpa.org.uk. We shall of course be drawing the attention of our transport planners and Councillors to this report, since many of the recommendations involve action at local government level.

A Walking Map of Oxford

Most of us will have seen the excellent cycling map of Oxford created by Richard Mann of Cyclox. Richard is coming to our June meeting to explain how his cycling map could be adapted to show a variety of pedestrian routes. This could be useful for commuters seeking the most direct route, for tourists and leisure walkers wanting the most picturesque, and for the many

walkers who just want to get away from heavy traffic. If you have ideas about the sort of routes that should be mapped, or if you have favourite routes you would like to share, please bring them to the next meeting in May, or to the June meeting. We can all help Richard produce a map that will be useful to all people on foot in Oxford.

Stalls

There will be lots of opportunities to help at OxPA stalls in the coming months: first at the Headington Festival, Sunday June 2nd, 1-5pm; Cowley Carnival is on Sunday July 7th and Elder Stubbs on Saturday August 17. All of these are enjoyable events and good opportunities to gain new members. Please get in touch with Felicity (251212) or Corinne (779663) if you can spare an hour or so to help spread our message.

St Giles

The campaign to transform St Giles has moved forward with a meeting arranged by OxPA for representatives of the County Council, Oxford Civic Society and Cyclox, with the distinguished

urban transport planner Ben Hamilton-Baillie. Ben is very interested in this project, and is returning to address a larger meeting to be held in the St Aldates room in the Town Hall on our usual monthly date, Tuesday July 23rd; so make sure this date is in your diaries! His advice at this early stage in our campaign includes the need to develop a clear objective and to identify the current problems. We need an accurate description of the existing situation, including buildings and their usage, and hard data on traffic – vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians, numbers, routes, and desire lines. We will be discussing how to start on this work at our May meeting.

Arrears

To all members who have not paid this year's subs, **please do so if you would like to remain a member of OxPA!** At £5 a year we remain exceptionally good value. We actively campaign, respond to official consultations, explore and learn about Oxford past and present on local walks, and send out a newsletter regularly. Our current major campaign, to narrow the roadway on St Giles without the need to reduce traffic (although speeds should come down) is going to need all hands on deck. Please keep involved with and support our invaluable work. If you would like to set up a direct debit so we need not remind you again, please contact OxPA's Membership Secretary Michaela, whose details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

Air Pollution

Oxford's air pollution still breaches EU guidelines for exposure, especially on St Aldates, Botley and Abingdon Roads, Hythe Bridge Street, Worcester Place, Beaumont Street, St Giles and Longwall (Oxford's unofficial inner ring road), and also on Cowley Road, St Clements, and at urban shopping areas such as Headington and Summertown. The only way to tackle this would be a programme of traffic reduction, but with no penalties from the EU on regions that do not meet air pollution reduction targets, our Councils for the most part ignore the implications of this invisible health threat. The European Parliament is looking at introducing penalties on Councils that do not reduce air pollution, but this means delays of at least a year, and in the meantime all we can do is be aware of the issue and lobby our Councillors.

STOP PRESS: Ray Jones

We have just received the sad news of the death of Ray Jones. Friends and colleagues are

invited to attend a memorial service on Saturday 5th May from 2-3pm at Cumnor Church.

Ray was one of the founder members of OxPA, and was Treasurer for the Association for well over a decade, during which time he was also an active member in very many other ways. Gentle, hardworking and persuasive, with unfaltering vision and dedication, Ray talked many members of the public into realising that they were pedestrians - whatever other mode of transport they also used to get around. He spoke eloquently about the need for strategies to ensure that journeys took account of walkers as well as wheeled vehicles. He took part in all OxPA's early campaigns and awareness-raising days, working to give walkers a voice in a city where they then had no representation whatsoever. He drew attention to everyday obstacles to walking and the need to think how they could be dealt with. He helped inspire the vision that has sustained us since those early times. In recent years Ray suffered ill-health, but dauntlessly continued to attend meetings when he could, arriving on foot as a bus user, and contributing with his fiery and pedestrian-focussed opinions and vision. Ray made a unique contribution to our work today; we have much to thank him for, and we remember him with love and admiration.

Next Meetings

May 28th at 7pm in the Town Hall. This meeting will focus on two topics, the St Giles campaign and a new Walking Map of Oxford. Please come to:-

- (1) help us draw up plans to survey pedestrians' movements in St Giles,
- (2) also bring your ideas and experience of walking in Oxford city to help Richard Mann create his walking map.

Tuesday 25 June at 7pm in Town Hall. Guest speaker, Richard Mann, will explain his ideas for the walking map of Oxford.

Tuesday July 23 at 7pm in Town Hall Ben Hamilton-Baillie will be present at a joint meeting of OxPA, Cyclox, and OCS.

Contacts

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