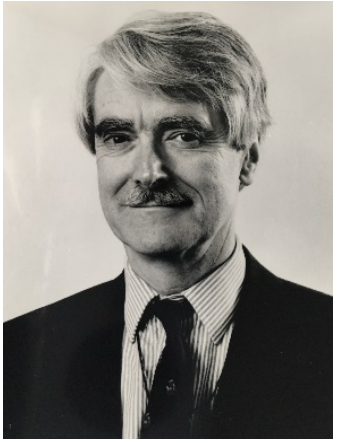
Walk Talk

Newsletter of Oxford Pedestrians Association

June 2018

Welcome to Newsletter 125



Professor Sir John Grimley Evans (1936 – 2018)

Members have been shocked to learn of the sudden death of Professor Sir John Grimley Evans, always known as Grimley. Grimley was well known to OxPA members both as the husband of our Honorary Secretary Corinne, and as a worker behind the scenes doing a lot to keep OxPA's affairs in order. Grimley made his medical career in the field of care for the elderly, and he introduced the term 'geratology' for this speciality. He argued for care of the elderly to be seen as a speciality in its own right. In parallel he had a distinguished academic career, becoming Professor of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, and later Professor of Clinical Geratology at the University of Oxford and a Fellow of Green Templeton College. His support for OxPA could be said to have kept the Association on its feet: he looked after the accounts and the membership list, and created and maintained our website. His photographic skills lay behind many of the pictures that we have used in publicity, including in the latest edition of A More Walkable Oxford. Sushila Dhall, OxPA's Chair, spoke warmly of Grimley's contribution to OxPA at a Celebration of his life in Green Templeton College on June 1st. Grimley is survived by Corinne, their three children and five grandchildren and we are sure all members will wish to join in sending our sincere condolences to the family. He will be very much missed by the community of Oxford pedestrians.

Botley Road

As part of a strategy of carrying out public highway audits, starting with Oxford's arterial routes, OxPA members carried out a detailed audit of Botley Road in July 2017, details of which can be accessed via our website. We sent our findings to County Officers, who have drawn up draft plans to improve Botley Road between Eynsham Road and Frideswide Square for walkers, cyclists and bus users. Funding is currently available from the National Productivity Investment Fund and Growth Deal for the section between Eynsham Road and Binsey Lane only, although the county council is hoping to secure more funding in the next few years for the section between Binsey Lane and Frideswide Square. The proposals are: to improve side road entrances with raised level crossings on desire lines (with the exception of Ferry Hinksey Road where options are still being debated). Current routine but illegal car parking will be stopped on the north footway, freeing up pavement space away from the road edge for walkers, with trees and grass between walkers and cyclists. The cycle lane will be moved to the road side of the pavement along all of Botley Road, with special treatment at bus stops, where cyclists will be directed away from boarding and alighting areas

(with calming measures and perhaps small zebra crossings) to allow walkers to access footway areas safely and conveniently. Cambers at corners will be levelled to prevent steep drops and slopes as part of side-entry treatments. The County is looking at installing new signal-controlled crossings across busy side roads (eg. Eynsham Road, by Seacourt P&R). A safer crossing option is planned for pedestrians accessing the new Waitrose; at present walkers wait on a small island in the middle of traffic lanes (see their Projects page at: https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/botley-road-corridor-improvements). Comments are welcome and can be sent to *martin.kraftl@oxfordshire.gov.uk* or written down for one of our OxPA officers to pass on. There will be a public consultation around November 2018 and construction is anticipated to start in autumn 2019.

Towpath accessibility – a note from Don O'Neal, Treasurer and wheelchair user

Wandering along the towpath in Oxford can be a good way to get away from the city's busy and noisy streets. In early May, I wandered along the towpath behind the houses on Abbey Road with a friend from Botley Road to Port Meadow. Although very bumpy, most of the towpath is wheelchair-accessible, but some parts do need updating to facilitate wheelchair access all the way along its route. For example, the bridge over the Castle Mill stream (see photo) is extremely dangerous, bumpy and steep. I had to ask two men who were passing-by to tilt my electric wheelchair on to its back wheels and lug me across the bridge. A bit further along is another bridge that was too steep to get on to without help from another passer-by (see photo). More needs to be done to make the whole towpath network accessible so that it can be enjoyed by wheelchair users.

Help Oxford Preservation Trust organise Oxford Open Doors

Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) would greatly appreciate help with delivery of the venue packs to the venues in Oxford taking part in this year's Open Doors Weekend: https://www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk/content/oxford-open-doors. Delivery of the packs would take place week commencing 20th August. Ruth Davis of Cyclox is planning to make this into an informal August social event with a meet-up before collecting venue packs. Each year OPT have approx. 130-150 different venues so about 100 packs require delivery. OPT can divide the venue packs into manageable lots in a specific geographical area to make delivery manageable for each volunteer. Volunteers delivering packs on foot would be allocated packs for venues within the city centre and within easy walking distance of OPT offices (in Turn Again Lane, ST Ebbes). We think that the venue packs are C4-sized envelope containing sign-up, instruction and contact sheets, membership fliers about OPT, name badges and pens. Volunteers should contact Ruth directly on *events@cyclox.org*. OPT said that anyone who helps would be invited to an OPT volunteer thank you event which is held normally near Christmas time.

Social Media

As we have discussed at several recent meetings, we need to interest more people in OxPA. Whilst we appreciate everyone's membership and interest, we especially need people who will be willing to take active roles. It has been suggested that we may engage more people by using social media. Oly Shipp has been running a very active OxPA Facebook page for some time now. Now Don O'Neal, our Treasurer, and Keith Frayn have been added as administrators and are making occasional posts, and Sushila, our Chair, will soon do the same. If you are a Facebook member, please have a look at the OxPA page and Like and Share liberally! We need members to help with other social media, in particular Twitter, Instagram and/or Snapchat. Please get in touch if you could help in this way (*oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com*).

More help needed!

We need more people to help out with OxPA's work, staffing stalls and helping with publicity and administration. Please consider if you could help and talk to one of the officers, or contact *oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com.*

Meetings:

June 26th 7pm Town Hall: Envisioning a city-wide strategy for pedestrians – led by Don O'Neal
July 28th details to follow

Contacts:

Chair: Sushila Dhall 790783
Secretary: Corinne Grimley Evans
Treasurer and Membership: Don O'Neal *email oxford.pedestrians.association@gmail.com*
Website: www.oxpa.org.uk
Facebook: Oxford Pedestrians Association - OxPA
Write to: OxPA, 12 Stable Close, Rewley Park, Oxford OX1 2RF.
National Pedestrians Association 0207 737 4900