

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO 48

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002

Welcome to Issue no. 48 of OxPA's Newsletter. It has been an exciting and hard-working two months, with Car-Free day celebrated in Oxford in a big way for the first time ever, and two surveys of Broad Street carried out, one on Car-Free Day and one a few weeks after that. Broad Street has been very much a focus for our work in the past two months. Thanks to all members who have been involved, and to Rebecca Carley of Oxford City Council, and a special thank-you to Corinne, without whose patience and hard grind none of it would have happened.

1) On Sunday September 22nd, from 10am until 4pm, the sun shone across a Broad Street where the air was clean and full of the sounds of people's voices. On European Car-Free Day this year no engine noises broke the combination of calmness and festivities on Broad Street. At 11am the Lord Mayor opened the event. There were Morris dancers, folk dancers, various singers and musicians, Sol Samba (a local drumming band), drinks and snacks, coloured chalks for children to decorate the street with, and a delightful sense of the street in public use. Oxfam and Mortons did a roaring trade, and where usually people keep to the crowded pavements, for one day they were encouraged to take possession of the vast public space. Looking east along Broad Street one could fully appreciate the beauty of the old buildings, and the sunlight glinting across the road. Jenny made a cake which was a model of cars waiting endlessly to cross at a zebra crossing, and lots of pedestrians walking along the road. **It was delicious, as was the pleasure of having a wide central public space free of vehicles for one day. Let us make this the first of many such events in Oxford.**

2) A survey was carried out on the OxPA stall of people who came to Car Free Day celebrations. A majority said car-free streets encouraged shopping, and that they would like to see Broad Street closed to traffic every day. On being asked whether there were other streets people would like to see closed to traffic, several were suggested. The main ones were **Queen St., High St., St Giles and Little Clarendon Street.**

3) OxPA did a survey with the Civic Society and the Consumer Society about parking on Broad Street, to find out who is using Broad St., and why. 500 car drivers and pedestrians answered our questions in two days, a Wednesday and a Saturday. The information received from the survey will be published in November. We will balance car drivers' and pedestrians' views as there are a great many more pedestrians on Broad St. than drivers. Although pedestrians are the ones who use the space more, very little space is allocated to people on foot.

4) OxPA asks members to please write URGENTLY as individuals to Samantha Tharme of the County Council, asking that the temporary parking on Broad St. not be made permanent. Currently drivers can park for half an hour, which together with the delivery vehicles means continuous traffic movements, and constant accompanying danger, noise and pollution. There are other central areas where disabled drivers can park, but very little safe space is allowed to walkers and shoppers coming on foot into central Oxford. **Broad Street is an obvious choice for pedestrianisation, being wide, attractive, central, and crowded with pedestrians.**

5) A lady called Tresesa O'Malley came to talk to OxPA about her situation. On August 2nd this year a cyclist riding along a pavement hit her with its 'stunt bar', and her leg was ripped open over the knee, severing nerves and tendons. She spent six days in hospital, and has gone from being healthy and active to walking with difficulty, with loss of feeling in her leg, swelling, and a disfiguring scar which means she feels she has to wear long skirts. She contacted the police, but they have not been co-operative. Her list of questions was as follows: (i) Did the cyclist commit an offence? (ii) Have the police inspected the cyclist's tyres? (iii) Was the cyclist insured? (iv) Who was the manufacturer of the bike? (v) **What can the police do to prevent such accidents? (vi) **Do the police liaise with other agencies to prevent such accidents?** (vii) **Who should enforce the law about cycling on the pavement?** OxPA has agreed to take the following actions: We will write to the police as no progress has been made on cycling on pavements and its enforcement. We will also ask for the figures on fines given to cyclists riding on pavements. Following this we will also write to the National Pedestrians Association to publicise Teresa's case.**

6) The issue of neglected footpaths. There are a lot of these in Oxford city, but the possibly the one along the Cherwell River to Marston takes the biscuit! A third of it is either under water or deeply muddy. Brambles are growing across it, a barbed wire fence runs alongside it, and the path leads straight across the busy Marston-Ferry Link Road without a crossing or even a sign to drivers to be aware of people crossing. The people in charge of un-surfaced footways in Oxford have been informed, and have said they will see about it, but there was great vagueness about who was actually responsible. **No road would ever be allowed to get as bad as this.**

7) From April 2003 we will have to pay a huge amount of money to use the Town Hall on a Monday evening. Rooms will only be free on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are investigating alternative venues. The venue has to be central to allow everybody to come to meetings.

8) Oxford Transport Strategy meeting. Corinne attended on behalf of OxPA, and found it very unsatisfactory. The officer running the meeting responded negatively to nearly all OxPA's points, and stopped any discussion of them. **These were the points rejected by the officer: 1) Could a health expert be present? 2) Can we have a survey made to look at the varying numbers of pedestrian crossings in different parts of Oxford? 3) Traffic goes at excessive speeds in the town centre; can anything be done about this? 4) The environment being generally hostile to pedestrians and cyclists in the town centre.** Corinne also raised the issue of the never-working bollard in Broad Street. This they said they are working on, and it should be fixed by the end of November.

Our next two meetings are on Mondays November 18th and December 16th, at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Please come, and bring a friend. Everyone is welcome!

OxPA wishes all its members a very happy festive season, and a New Year full of promise!