

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO 49

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2003

Welcome to Issue number 49 of OxPA's Newsletter, and a very Happy New Year to all our readers! May this be a winter of no trip or slip falls, and we all emerge from this cold dark period well and ready to walk the year through. Membership subs are due now, as they run from the beginning of the calendar year. Six Newsletters a year, and the opportunity to be involved in an active, friendly and effective group still costs only £3. If renewing by cheque please sent cheques to: Ray Jones, 72 Cumnor Hill, Oxford, OX2 9HU. Here is a note from Ray about standing orders and cheques:

Our membership continues to increase, and members paid £425 in subscriptions last year. We are getting more and more by standing order, but some of you paid by cheque in addition to paying by standing order, so a specific reminder is enclosed. - Ray Jones, Membership Secretary

1) OxPA has lovely t-shirts and bags for sale, with our logo on them. T-shirts are £8.50, and strong reusable cotton bags are £9.50. **Buy one of each and get your membership for the year free!**

2) OxPA, Oxford Civic Society and Oxford Consumers' Group handed our Broad Street survey into County Officers. But the Broad Street meeting went ahead as if our survey did not exist. No reference was made to it at all. **It was decided at the meeting to make Broad Street parking permanent, but start charging for it at £1.50 per hour.** If it is too late for new traffic orders permitting one hour car parking there, then things will stay as they are (half an hour's free parking available to whoever wishes to drive into the centre of Oxford and park there.) **Analysing the results of the survey; in 16 hours just two people who parked on Broad Street used the space for loading/unloading purposes. Only a third of drivers were parking there to shop on Broad Street or in the Covered Market.** There will be a public consultation on the proposal to change the traffic orders, so we will have a chance to make our objections.

It is interesting to note that key Officers and most County Councillors who are making decisions about Broad Street live outside Oxford City. **Chief Transport Planner Eddie Luck lives in Northampton, and Principal Engineer Darius Seroczynski lives in Ealing.**

3) OxPA now has a website. Log on to <http://www.oxpa.org.uk/index.htm> to view our Newsletters. There will also be an introduction to OxPA, campaigns, t-shirts for sale, links, and dates of meetings. **OxPA is looking for a computer-literate member interested in maintaining and updating out web site as necessary.** It should not be a particularly onerous task. Please volunteer if you would like to play a valuable role in OxPA whilst sitting at home at your desk!

4) Jenny has run OxPA's stall efficiently and well for seven years, and is now retiring from this role. A vote of thanks was proposed at our December meeting for her hard work and dedication. **Michaele Philbin** will be running our stall at various events hereafter.

5) Our Technical Advisor, Patrick, has landed a job working for the Government to promote cycling in central south England. This is good news for OxPA as Patrick is opposed to cycle lanes on pavements, and is able to hold pedestrians' needs in mind as he thinks of cyclists. **But what we really need is the creation of comparable posts for people representing pedestrians.**

6) Oxfordshire County Council has put in place a zebra-crossing! It runs across Walton Well Road, where Walton Street becomes Kingston Road. **Unfortunately this zebra-crossing is nothing to celebrate, because it lies several metres to the west of the desire line, taking the pedestrian off the main track and down onto the side street.** Meanwhile, just to ensure that pedestrians who still cross on the desire line (the vast majority of them) are inconvenienced, the dropped kerb on the direct line has been removed and replaced with a high kerb. Planning, expense and work went into this feature, which sadly will only be used by a fraction of the numbers of those walking along the route.

7) A slippery start to 2003. OxPA reminds walkers to take great care at this time, as pavements are rarely sanded like roads are. Abingdon Road, closed to traffic because cars driving through the flooded area of the highway were going so fast that the wash was flooding local houses, is beautifully quiet, but treacherously slippery, with black ice all along the edge of the pavement nearest peoples' houses. The alternative pedestrian and cycle route, even less passable than the road in that it is wholly under thick sheets of ice and deep water, unlike the road has no signs whatsoever warning people not to go that way.

8) Guided Transit Express (GTE). This is a system of guided buses which several groups are interested in building in Oxford. It is what environmentalists call 'green wash' because it looks as if it is good for the environment, but is not. The idea is to have a guided bus system which will zip from Oxford's outskirts to its centre without obstructions. But because it means the expensive construction of the equivalent of a new road built across some of Oxford's quietest green places and meadows, its value is under question. It has been pointed out that putting bus gates and queue relocation systems along roads such as Abingdon Road would achieve the same speed for buses except at a fraction of the cost. **And the benefits to vulnerable road users, who include thousands of walkers, would be priceless.**

Our next two meetings are on Mondays January 20th, and February 17th. Please come, and feel free to bring a friend. Everybody is welcome!