

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO 50

MARCH/APRIL 2003

Welcome to Issue no. 50 of OxPA's Newsletter! An important practical change is afoot; from April 2003 OxPA will be meeting on the third Tuesday (rather than the third Monday) of each month. The venue and time remain the same; at the Town Hall at 7pm. Therefore the dates of meetings after our March one are: Tuesdays April 15th, May 20th, and June 17th. OxPA has booked the Judges Room in the Town Hall for these meetings. The reason for this change is that Oxford City Council will no longer be allowing use of rooms free on any days but Tuesdays and Thursdays. Had we stayed with our Monday meeting we would have had to pay £27.50 per hour, which would have been at least £50 per meeting! Sadly there are some active members who won't be able to attend on a Tuesday. OxPA hopes that other members who may not have been able to attend on a Monday, will be encouraged to come on a Tuesday instead.

1) **Information on the GTE, now otherwise named 'Expressway Oxford'**. The plan is to lay tracks at least 6 metres wide alongside Oxford canal and railway running from the outskirts of Oxford to Oxford centre and the railway station. **The southern section would run south of Pembroke and along the virtual quarry sidings, with a 6 metre embankment over Grandpont Nature Reserve 'as far away from houses as possible', down to a new junction with the A34. Peartree to Redb.ridge would be the 'core' track.** Apparently there will be 'prioritised junctions' in places but these are 'a detail' which will be looked at later. The trap-grounds would also be used, but we are assured that 'as this is a democracy all bodies must say how they feel.' An Environmental Impact Assessment will cover all flora and fauna in the areas where the track could be laid. In the future perhaps the guided bus might run from Witney and Woodstock to Oxford centre, but initially it will be an alternative park and ride route. When asked why the existing arterial routes could not be used Mr Laphorn said that as there is no room (because of current traffic levels) the Highway Authority would not sanction it. **For further information on Expressway Oxford, contact: GTE for Oxford Ltd, PO Box 1362, Oxford OX4 2ZB.**

2) **News from the National Pedestrian Association ('Living Streets')**. This body is focussing on the linked issues of traffic speeds and pavement cyclists as two major deterrents to walking. In their Policy Briefing, Living Streets suggests we campaign for slower speeds on roads at the same time as campaigning for cycle-free pavements. The relevant policy briefing is included with this Newsletter; however should members want to access more information on this and other issues pertinent to walkers please look up our website on <http://www.oxpa.org.uk>. We have learned that as of August 1st 1999 'the relevant statutory instruments have been put in place and the police have the power to issue fixed penalty notices to pavement cyclists'. But since they are often unwilling or too busy to focus on this, or apparently unaware of this legal ruling, it helps to have ways of encouraging pavement cyclists back onto roads oneself. Usually walkers find pavement cyclists angry and defensive when tackled; however an effective method is to comment loudly and in a tone of polite surprise, "Goodness! Aren't you old enough to cycle on the road?" Especially useful when dealing with young adults!

3) On Thursday March 20th, at the High Court on The Strand, London, three groups (Road Peace, the Slower Speeds Initiative, and Transport 2000) are challenging the Government on the issue of speed cameras. In a pilot scheme eight Police Authorities were allowed to keep fines raised by local speed camera initiatives. More Authorities wanted to join, then the motorists' lobby attacked, saying cameras should only be put in if they were coloured yellow **and only in places where four or more fatalities or serious injuries had been caused in three years.** The Government gave in to this, and is now under challenge. **Please attend the High Court in London and give your support to the challengers.** Details available on our website or contact Corinne.

4) Rescue Oxford (ROX) have demanded more parking places for private traffic in Oxford's centre. This has largely been turned down by the County, but ROX representative Mr Jones persuaded the Council to do another survey and site visits to places such as Oriel Square, where he hopes there will be room made for new parking places in the face of his insistence. **However, on-the-ball OxPA reps are going on the same route with the same County Officer (Samantha Tharme), so the pressure not to reinstate parking will be equal to the pressure applied by ROX.**

5) Fed-up with increased obstructions on footpaths and pavements? Some members are finding taking photos with a digital camera useful in discouraging the offenders. To put pictures on our website please send them to Corinne. **Perhaps some people can be shamed into thinking of walkers!**

6) Following up the issue of slippery pavements and footpaths during the coldest time of year when roads were sanded and salted. Clearly vehicles are still officially considered more important than pavement users. We are informed that pavements were not sanded/salted because of staff shortages. This is doubtless the case, but extra staff would have been required at Accident and Emergency to cope with increased numbers of broken bones and severe bruises. For some a broken bone can mean months of lost mobility. **A saving in one place means more spending in another.**

7) Membership Renewal. Most of you have paid very promptly but the few who have not yet renewed will have a letter with this newsletter.

Our next two meetings are on Monday March 17th and Tuesday April 15th, at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Please note the change of day as from April this year. Please come, and bring a friend. Everyone is welcome!

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