

# Oxford Pedestrians Association



OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER JULY/AUGUST 1996

Welcome to issue no. 10 of the OxPA Newsletter! A lot has been going on during the past two months, not all of it welcome news to pedestrians. Unfortunately, although we put forward our views on things like major road changes involving pavement loss, new crossings etc., our views are not being recorded by the Powers That Be. We will have the Pedestrian Forum on the City Council, which is a tiny step in the right direction, but our hopes for a Pedestrian Sub-Committee, and a Pedestrian Officer who would walk everywhere and represent pedestrians in an expert way, are far from being realised. However, *we* are here, and will go on representing the pedestrian point of view to those who make the decisions. **Please, if any of you become aware of any road schemes which do not appear to take walkers into account, do ring the relevant department and get your views heard.** It is only by *being* a voice that we will come to be recognised as one. It is rumoured that Rhonda Riachi is to chair the Ped. Forum, which is starting in October, so she may be a good person to contact, through the City Council.

1) Mark Jarman, County Engineer, came to our last OxPA meeting, to talk about the Station Site, and pedestrians generally. The plans for the Station Site are an important part of Oxford Transport Strategy, which aims to pedestrianise Cornmarket and take the through traffic out of High Street. However, just beyond these central streets there are streets which are just as heavily used by pedestrians, but are going to be made extremely unpleasant.

(a) A new stretch of road is planned, joining the Station end of Hythe Bridge Street to Park End Street just in front of the Station. The new road is to be **four** lanes wide, with traffic going in both directions, funnelling into and from Hythe Bridge Street, which, like Park End Street, is to lose pavement space to make way for more cars; (b) Park End Street is to be the 'new' Cornmarket, for buses, cyclists, general access traffic, and (you've guessed it) pedestrians; (c) Around corners from junctions there are pelican crossings planned, the kind which make you wait 30 seconds at each one, and with buttons to push in the middle of roads so walkers cannot cross the whole road in one go; (d) In order to build the new road, the old LMS building is to be taken down and stored, with a view to putting the walls up somewhere else on the Station Site at a later date. As the foundations cannot be moved, only half the building will be re-erected, if indeed it is possible to do this, and various preservation groups are against moving it on architectural and archaeological grounds.

We would like to see direct pedestrian access to the Station, along a safe and pleasant route. It has been pointed out that the plans will delay pedestrians getting to the station, because of the indirect placing of the crossings and the time wasted waiting for the lights to change. Pedestrians have legal priority over side roads, which they lose on these planned routes. **When the plans for the Station Site went to a meeting of full City Council, despite each councillor being presented with vital information from OxPA concerning pedestrians, the City Council saw fit to agree to the County's plans for the site.** It would be helpful if OxPA members wrote to their councillors asking them to think carefully about facilities for pedestrians.

Mr Jarman also informed us that **pedestrian numbers are not currently a part of the computer data which is assessed** when plans for roads like this are made. So we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. There is still much work to be done before we are considered as important as drivers!

2) A vote of thanks to Corinne for our *beautiful* banner. We shall be proud to stand (and walk) under it.



3) 80% of Cornmarket was closed for part of a Sunday. OxPA had a stall there. People were very pleased to be given leaflets and information from OxPA, and 3 new members have joined as a result.

4) Pedestrian motions went to full County Council meeting in July. They have been referred to Highway and Environmental Committees. At 10am on Thursday August 29th is the Highways Committee meeting in County Hall where Dr Tony Cox will present our huge petition calling for a pedestrian crossing outside Worcester College. Members of the public are able to attend but not speak. Please come and support Tony, who will also be making a speech about the needs of pedestrians in Oxford. On Wednesday September 25th, also at 10am in County Hall, is the meeting of Environmental Committee. Your Newsletter Editor will be talking here against the planned Station Site road. Again, people are welcome to attend, and it would be good to have an OxPA presence at both meetings, given how easily those in power find it to forget us.

5) The Highways and Traffic Committee on the City Council are to decide whether we can have a representative from OxPA on the Cycle Sub-Committee. Like the Pedestrian Forum, this is less than we would like and have asked for, but it is a move in the right direction. It is worth noting the Cycle Sub-Committee's comment about cycling in Oxford: "**Cyclists do not like cycling on pavements.**"

6) On July 13th Jenny attended the AGM of the National Pedestrians' Association. Apparently they are impressed by the work we are doing in Oxford, which is greatly encouraging. Jenny was made an Executive Committee Member, in recognition of our good work here. Congratulations to Jenny.

7) **OxPA needs a Press Officer!** If there is anybody out there who has one or two hours to spare from time to time, and would like to be more actively involved, we need you! Please let us know if you can help, or ring one of our contact numbers for more information.

8) On August 17th 1896, Mrs Bridget Driscoll became the first pedestrian to be killed by a motor car on a road. At the inquest the coroner commented that he hoped such a tragedy would never happen again! **Since then a quarter of a million pedestrians have been killed on British roads, and 17,000,000 people have been killed on roads throughout the world.** 'Roadpeace' (a national charity for road traffic victims) are holding a rally in London on August 17th, in conjunction with the National P.A., Friends of the Earth, and Transport 2000. In support of this. Jenny is organising a rally in Oxford on the same day, with a stall, banner, leaflets etc. Please ring her if you would like to be part of this. The rally is to be from midday until 5pm, on Saturday August 17th.

9) **Our next two meetings are on Monday August 19th and Monday September 16th, at 7.30pm, in the Town Hall. Everybody is welcome, please come along, and bring any interested friends.**

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