

# Oxford Pedestrians Association



OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 22 JULY/AUGUST 1998

Welcome to Issue no. 22 of our Newsletter! Your Newsletter Editor was sent a package anonymously which turned out to contain the latest edition of an amusing non-official publication called 'Pavement Parking News'. It is full of photographs of cars obstructing pavements, sometimes only yards from a car park or legal space. But whilst the commentary is funny, behind it lies a serious message, which is we are losing more pavement space in Oxford every day to drivers who selfishly park on footways and go off for hours leaving pushchairs, wheelchairs, people holding hands or helping one another, or carrying bulky shopping, unable to get by without going into the road. This is where I plug the Pedestrian Association's little stickers. Unlike the heavy-duty ones some of us use, these are tiny and peel off easily, and most drivers need but one of these to ensure they park with more care in the future. Sheets of these can be obtained from Margaret or on our stalls, and your Newsletter Editor speaks from experience in saying that using these turns an annoying inconvenience into an empowering experience.

1) A depressing but interesting fact gleaned from minutes of the Pedestrian & Cycle Sub-Committee; **pedestrians make up over 50% of all fatal accidents in Oxford.** Therefore it is more risky now to walk than it is to drive, cycle, or take a bus. This in a city which likes to think of itself as pedestrian-friendly; ask almost any Councillor!

2) **The results of the official pedestrian walk from Oxford Station to the Plain:** (i) No safe crossing on Botley Road/Park End St. at the station entrance; (ii) Hythe Bridge St. pavements are far too narrow; (iii) the bus shelter on Cornmarket St. is too short, and cantilever shelters are generally needed; (iv) Carfax is a pedestrian meeting point, which apparently causes problems; (v) Outside the Baptist Church the cycles stands are at an angle which is awkward for pedestrians to negotiate; (vi) Widened pavements needed everywhere, and more on-street (not on-pavement) cycle parking; (vii) More of a pedestrian island is needed outside Magdalen College as lots of people cross the road there. There was another pedestrian walkabout on June 25th, and the results will be in the next issue of this Newsletter.

3) **Cycle tracks on pavements:** On Botley Road traffic speeds have remained the same. Cycle use has decreased, there have been three pedestrian accidents where there were none before, and there are now more cycle accidents than there were. Where is the safe planning here for pedestrians and cyclists?

4) **LMS Station Site update:** At a public meeting called by opponents of the Station Site Road Jenny spoke on behalf of pedestrians and OxPA, and Patrick spoke about alternatives to the current proposal, which would protect the building and public space around it. At the end of the two-hour meeting over 200 people voted to ask the Councils to hold a proper public consultation, and to come up with alternatives of their own to the damaging present plan. (There were two votes against this, and two abstentions.) On the City Council the Pedestrian & Cycle Sub-Committee voted to support this resolution and came up with a list of points about the current scheme which made it unworkable. The County Engineers are currently looking at these. But at a meeting of the City Planning Sub-Committee, under the direction of the Chair, the majority of Councillors voted that the LMS building should be demolished to make way for the road. Although this road is not part of OTS, they are saying OTS depends on it. This is the main point where those in opposition to the Councils' proposal differ, because the Station Site road proposal did not form part of OTS and was therefore not part of the OTS traffic orders. At a subsequent meeting of full City Council, again most Councillors voted to demolish the LMS building so that road construction can begin on the Station Site. Since this goes against the Local Plan it is now up to the Secretary of State. He can say a Listed Building Public Inquiry ought to be held, or he can say that County traffic engineers are right, and road building in



the area should proceed before Cornmarket is pedestrianised. **If any readers care about this, please write to: Sue Read, Government Office for the South East, Second Floor, Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford, Surrey GU1 4GA. This is the office which will advise the Secretary of State on whether to call in the proposal. It is worth sending copies of any letters to English Heritage, and to John Prescott.**

5) OxPA was mentioned in 'Walk,' when Jenny sent in a photograph of of cycle racks positioned in the roads instead of on pavements. The photos were sent to Camden, whose Authority responded by replacing car parking on streets with cycle parking in Malet St, the heart of London University!

6) Phil Goodwin's report on traffic disappearance has been officially sanctioned by the Government. The basis of the report has far-reaching implications for road-building, because it shows how if you take an area congested with traffic, and put in a crossing or take out a lane, a short term period of extra congestion is followed by a reduction in traffic, as it 'disappears.' A local example is Botley Road at this time of road works, where after an initial time of congestion, private car traffic has diminished by 20%. Bus, pedestrian and cycle numbers have not been affected. It is interesting to note that at the time this survey was carried out 50% of the traffic (private cars with single people in them) carried only 14% of the people, and buses, which made up only 5% of the traffic, carried 50% of the people.

7) OxPA is planning a demonstration with a stall at Bonn Square in early October, to draw attention to high pollution levels suffered by pedestrians in Oxford centre. After OTS Queen St and George St will be more polluted than they are at present, and we want to draw attention to this by wearing masks, and highlighting the fact that buses do not turn their engines off even if they are standing there for more than three minutes.

**We will discuss this and other pedestrian-relevant things at our next meeting on Monday September 21st. (Town Hall closed Aug.)**

**Please come, everybody is welcome, and please feel free to bring a friend or anyone interested.**

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