

# Oxford Pedestrians Association



OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 24  
Nov/Dec 1998

Welcome to Issue No. 24 of our Newsletter! Although there has been only one meeting of OxPA since the last Newsletter went out, there is so much material accumulating for the next one that your Newsletter Editor decided to do it at the beginning instead of in the middle of the two-month period.

1) **Mr Roger Pitman, Environmental Health Officer who specialises in air pollution in Oxford, is coming to our next meeting, on November 16th.** Please come, armed with any questions you have always wanted answers to on the subject of what we breathe when shopping, working, studying etc. in Oxford's historic centre. **Mr Craig Rossington, writer and collator of the County Council's Draft Walking Strategy is coming to our meeting on Monday January 18th.** He is sympathetic to the needs of walkers, although they are not considered a priority by the Department as a whole.

2) **It is an especially good time to meet these Officers, because the above-mentioned Draft Walking Strategy is now available for public comment, which has to be in by the end of January 1999. Copies of the Strategy can be obtained from Environmental Services, Speedwell St., Oxford, tel no 815718.**

3) **Oxpens update.** The result of the Public Inquiry into the City Council's plan to develop this area with a casino and night clubs was that the plan was overturned by the Secretary of State's decision not to allow it. On behalf of OxPA, Patrick, (who recently gained a Distinction in his MSc in Transport Planning) argued that walking routes to the site were difficult if not non-existent, and the Secretary of State seemed to take this on board when coming to his decision.

4) **Apparently Councils have powers to ban or to allow pavement parking!** The suggestion that this power be used to clear pavements of parked vehicles, at least in order to secure the minimum standard footway width endorsed by the Councils, is going before both Councils. **The City Council will see it via our seat on Pedestrian Cycle Sub-Committee on Feb 5th next year, the County via their Highways and Road Safety Sub-Committee on Feb 18th.** Members of the public can request to speak at Council meetings, but must do so well in advance. So if you too are one of those unlucky souls who has to walk single file down streets, or is forced out into the road by parked traffic, or have tripped on a slab broken by another set of heavy wheels, this may be your chance to tell relevant Councillors and Officers what effect their 'hands off' policy has had on real people who regularly walk about out there on Oxford's streets.

5) **Report from the Traffic Working Group.** Cutteslowe's residents are calling for the closure of Jackson Rd to traffic cutting through to the A40. At peak times several hundred cars per hour pass along the street at speeds of over 50mph. Residents cited danger to children, general danger, noise and pollution as reasons for the closure. But the reply to the petition to the Highways Agency was that we must not delay traffic on the Oxford Bypass, or increase traffic delays on Banbury Rd. Therefore Jackson Rd must remain a rat-run for hundreds of drivers twice a day, and the residents' misery is to continue. Sounds as though we could do with some pedestrian infiltration of the Highways Agency!

6) **The footway across the site has been quietly dropped from Wafic Said's Business School in front of Oxford Rail Station. This footway was a feature of the original plan for the Business School approved by the City Council, and also appears in the Local Plan as a condition of development in the area.** Patrick, our Transport Advisor, raised the issue at the recent Public Meeting about the School, but it is not clear whether it will now be included. Please contact Members and Officers of the City Council Planning Committee to ask about this.



7) And writing of the Station Site, have any members noticed the shady old 1930's chestnut trees between Oxford Station and Botley Road railway bridge? People have probably noticed them without realising it. But these trees are to be sawn down so that Botley Road can be widened towards the new four-lane station site road on the LMS site. People are braving the elements living in tree houses in the marked chestnut trees, in an attempt to protect and draw attention to the trees. Food, blankets, candles, and other donations are always gratefully received by these people, who do not believe the road need be widened there at all. It will only create more traffic in the area and does nothing for people accessing the station on foot or by bicycle.

8) Following OxPA member Christina's letter of complaint to Oxford Bus Company about buses leaving their engines running for long periods when stationary, she received a letter stating company policy. All drivers are told to switch their engines off if they are likely to wait for more than one minute or the queue is more than 10 passengers long. A message has been put into a staff circular reminding drivers of this policy. And the message for us is keep writing those letters! Unless we walkers draw attention of those in power to our concerns they will never know what those are.

9) A reminder to all readers: Whether you think you are a good photographer or not, the Pedestrians Association has need of you if you have a camera. Please use up that old film (or that new one for that matter!) taking pictures of vehicles owned by national companies (such as BT, Southern Electric, the Councils, ComTel, etc. Send copies to Jenny (at end of Newsletter) who will pass them on to the National Association, who wish to do something about the problem of heavy vehicles using pavements as car parks.

10) A survey was conducted into people who drive their children to school. 60% of parents do this, and when asked why, they said the streets are 'too dangerous' for their children to walk in. However it was found that only 20% of parents then return to pick up their children after school. I include this vignette because it is an interesting example of illogical behaviour.

11) Wearing a different hat, your Newsletter Editor took the County Officer in charge of the new Walking Strategy on a walk across the centre of the city, pointing out the dangers and lack of crossings along Oxford's unofficial inner ring route. Mr Rossington took notes on danger points such as in front of Worcester College, across the middle of Beaumont St, St Giles, Parks Rd, and Longwall St. In due course they will form the basis of a report to Environmental Committee.

12) Don't forget your OxPA stalls! There is one at the One World Fair on Sat Nov 14th, and one at the Green Fair on Dec 12th. Stalls are how we raise awareness of our existence and of the rights of walkers. It is fun being on them as you meet lots of nice people and have interesting conversations. If anyone can offer time, or to bake a cake or anything like that, please contact Margaret or Jenny (end of Newsletter).

Our next two meetings are on Mon Nov 16th, and Mon Dec 21st (this being subject to confirmation, please contact Jenny). Please come, and feel free to bring a friend or any interested person. Everybody is welcome!

And whilst I am at it, it is early for this but there won't be another Newsletter until January 1999, so:

**A HAPPY FESTIVE SEASON TO ALL OUR READERS, AND MAY THE NEW YEAR BRING  
US ALL MORE SAFETY, COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE AS WE WALK.**

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