

# Oxford Pedestrians Association

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO. 30  
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1999

Welcome to Issue no. 30 of our Newsletter, which brings us to the end of five happy years campaigning and raising the profile of pedestrians and our needs in Oxford. Your Newsletter editor mis-numbered the last one, which should have read 'Issue no. 29', my apologies for this. It is nearing not only the end of the year but (dare I say it) also the century and the millennium. Your Newsletter Editor's hopeful belief is that faced with the weight of a thousand years ahead instead of behind us, people en masse, including government, will start to be longer-sighted. Thus many sustainable things, like putting pedestrians at the centre of transport planning, will actually be adhered to. (I said the belief is hopeful!)

1) For those interested, there will be a pre-meeting at 7pm before each meeting of OxPA, to put the agenda together. Anyone can come along. It means we have a little longer for the actual meeting, which often ends in a bit of a hurry due to our extremely interesting discussions taking longer than anticipated.

2) It is time we had another demonstration. The walk we did in town tying ribbons around obstacles and culminating at a dangerous crossing point was cheap, cheerful and fun, and we roused peoples' interest in pedestrians. But it was now years ago. Somebody who is not already working flat out is needed to organise this so that we can all take part. Is there any member who would step into this breach? **Contact your Newsletter Editor (no. at end of page) if you are that person!**

3) Another depressing item of news from the Station Site Road saga. The granite paving setts given by Wafic Said's Business School for the bus and cycle lane are impossible for anyone to cycle on. So cyclists are responding in two ways; by risking their lives and inhaling the fumes on the new four lane road, or (you've guessed it) **by cycling safely along the pavement.** The Director of Environmental Services, David Young (tel. 815827) is aware of widespread misery with the junction, but his officers are responding only by speeding up the cycle of traffic light changes to 'get the junction moving' ie. mostly the cars. When asked how this would benefit pedestrians the answer was that their road crossing times will be more frequent. However, nothing is going to be done about the pollution levels, dangers, ill-placed and ill-timed crossings, or the fateful granite cobbles until at least April 1st 2000, due to funding mechanisms. It strikes me ironic that £millions can be found for a stretch of new road, but nothing for urgent remedial action should the road not do what it was supposed to do, **which was 'improve things for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users.'**

4) Recognition goes to two of our members: (1) **Patrick Lingwood, our Technical Advisor**, has got a new job as part of the Transport and Planning team at Oxford Brookes University. On his first day he presented research on pedestrians and cyclists in Local Transport Plans to Ben Plowden, Director of the National Pedestrians' Association. It is good news for all of us that Patrick now has this role, as the Planning Dept. at Oxford Brookes is both forward-looking and influential. (2) **Margaret Hodson, our Headington contact**, who did our stalls and was very active on all fronts until recently when she 'retired' from frontline action at the grand age of 83. Always warm, friendly, willing and humorous, Margaret is the sort of person we could all aspire to being.

5) Help is needed on our stall at three dates in the near future: **Sat 13th Nov., at the One World Fair in the Town Hall; Sat Dec 4th, at the CND Fair in Wesley Memorial Hall; and Sat Dec 11th, at the Green Fair in the Town Hall.** All offers of help appreciated. It is fun standing at our stall. You meet interesting people, get free entrance to the general event, and can feel you are doing something really



worthwhile! If you cannot help on the stall, please consider making us something for it. Cakes, toffee, quiche, marmalade, etc. can all be sold to raise us a little extra funding.

**6) Time of OxPA meetings.** Some members wanted the time of the monthly meetings raised as an issue in the Newsletter. We usually meet at 7.30pm on the third Monday of the month. Are there members who would come if the time was made earlier/later? Do the dark evenings in winter put people off who would come if we met eg. an hour earlier? Let us know!

**7) And here is a contribution to the Newsletter from Patrick, our Technical Advisor:**  
**New Draft PPG13 Planning Guidance.** This may sound obscure, but it is probably the most important single document coming from the Government. PPG's are "Policy and Planning Guidance", which the Government issues on various topics, eg PPG6 talks about shopping. The guidance forms the basis of how local government decides planning applications and general policy (through the Local Plan, Structure Plan and Local Transport Plan). PPG13 (Transport) (issued 1994) has a particular fame, as the document which first steered the country away from road building and car use. It states that planning should contribute to reducing car use and promoting walking and cycling. There have probably been thousands of planning applications decided on the words of PPG13, not to mention hundreds of academic journals discussing its implications. Now the Government has issued revised draft guidance for comment. At a first reading the approach is generally the same, but the devil is in the detail (multi-million pound developments can sometimes seem to hinge on the interpretation of one word), so it deserves much closer scrutiny. **For an interesting read, and to know what your council *should* be doing, write for a free copy to: DETR Free Literature, PO Box No 236, Wetherby, L23 7NB, or 'phone 0870 1226 236.**

**8) Plans for Old Prison Site, New Road.** County Lib Dems and Conservatives teamed up to support the leasing of the Old Prison to private developer Trevor Osborne, who wishes to turn most of it into a hotel. His plans need further revision as he intends to 'seek a relaxation of Oxford Transport Strategy' to allow cars access to Westgate carpark up New Road, which he is unlikely to get. Osborne's plan has pedestrian routes through it, but with gates onto the site 'which may be locked at night.' Pedestrian access may be confined to daylight hours, which is a shame as old buildings can be so romantic to walk by at night.

**9) Westgate Centre is to be extended back as far as Westgate car park, which is to move underground.** That area of St Ebbe's is now officially considered pedestrian and visitor unfriendly (which it is). Shop units are set to increase, car parking spaces will increase marginally, Bonn Square is to have a facelift, and there is to be a new bus interchange where currently the multi-storey car park is standing. Plans are on display in Westgate shopping centre now, so go and see them and fill in one of their forms which invite comment.

10) And speaking of inviting comment, do take the time to think about and fill in the enclosed questionnaire about best/worst crossings you know. The more the better!

**Our next two meetings are on Monday Nov 15th and Monday Dec 13th, at 7.30pm in the Town Hall. Please note that our December meeting is a week earlier than usual. Mincemeat pies will be served, so do come, and as usual please bring a friend.**

**Happy Christmas to you all, and may a thousand years of walking begin joyfully on Jan 1st!**

#### Contact Numbers

Tony Cox (Membership Secretary).....279510

Margaret Hodson (Headington Contact).....763597

Patrick Lingwood (Technical Advisor) and Sushila Dhall (Newsletter Editor)...553415

Corinne Grimley-Evans (Main letter-writer and Attender of Meetings).....779663

Jill Haas (Back-up and Press Officer)

Christina Millest (Minutes).....768073

Jenny Linsdell (Stalls).....246079

#### Address of National Pedestrians Association

3rd Floor, 31-33 Bondway, Vauxhall, London SW8 1SJ. Tel. 0171 820 1010. Fax 0171 820 8208.