

Oxford Pedestrians Association



OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO 31
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2000

Welcome to Issue No.31 Of OXPA's newsletter! Apologies for its lateness. Your newsletter Editor's computer crashed, swallowing it up irretrievably. So, this is it. The New Millennium. For pedestrians in the city centre at midnight on December 31st it was a mixed experience. Great patches of traffic-free streets (because so many people were away from home for the period), and some hellish streets with anarchic drunk drivers tearing up and down, horns blaring. So the conflict over public space and who it is best geared towards moves into the 21st century.

(1) Renewal time for OXPA members. The cost is still £3 per year, for six newsletters and the chance to attend interesting meetings. Please send cheques (donations always welcome) to Tony Cox at New College, Oxford. Or fill in one of the standing order forms enclosed with this newsletter.

2) Walking on, or rather in, water. Giant puddles at the base of the sloping pavement crossings, created for the OTS, make them impossible to use, unless you can jump across them. Should anyone find themselves having to negotiate such an obstacle, please save your irritation and ring Dariusz Sereschinsky on [81, giving the location. He will pass on the details to the relevant engineer. Apparently Alan Bloodworth [81 is currently dealing with such problems at the station site.

3) On Leopold Street in East Oxford new development plans include crossfalls (i.e. pavement slopes across the width) for 20-30 yards on each side of the road in order to give cars access to their parking spaces. Even the fit and able find sloping pavements uncomfortable to walk on, those with any walking difficulty or who are using push-chairs or wheelchairs can find them painful or even impossible to use. An officer at a Pedestrian and Cycle sub-committee told OXPA that legally they are bound to provide access for cars and this takes precedence over pedestrians! OXPA is not convinced of this and, anyway, they could try and design it better. OXPA has written to the Planning Committee and pointed out that cars seem to have no difficulty getting onto kerbed pavements if they want to park on them! If you are concerned about a crossfall you can ring either John Keene or John Cramer [] at the city council.



4) **Building sites.** Where do we begin to make an impact? The former Post Office site in Becket Street has been completely fenced off including all the pavements up to the kerb line. At the top of Walton Crescent there are builders' vehicles on one pavement and fenced-off supplies on the other. Outside Debenhams in the city centre we had a doubled pavement for a while, now it is reduced to a strip so narrow that unless you are unencumbered, lithe and shadow-thin, you cannot walk along it.

5) At 2pm. on Friday January 28th there will be an official city Pedestrian and Cycle sub-committee walk from Oxford Station, through the centre to the Plain. Everyone is encouraged to come along. We have notes from the last walk so, at each stage, we can see what has or has not been changed. It should be interesting.

6) **Horspath Road traffic calming.** Jill Haas has walked the site and written to the council on OXPA's behalf making various suggestions. She has also asked them, as a general point, to pay more attention to the detailed, on-the-ground engineering so as not to repeat some of the difficult and dangerous situations for pedestrians that there are, for example, in Magdalen Road.

7) It is likely that the constitution of the national Pedestrians Association will change and this will need to include a regularisation of the relationship between local groups and the national association. This might involve a need for everyone to be a member of the national PA. This is in order to conform to the demands of the Charity Commission. OXPA will keep you informed, but is thinking of maybe introducing a Supporters' subscription for those who feel they cannot afford a national one.

All this and more will be discussed at our meetings on Monday January 17th and February 21st at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Everybody is welcome!

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