

Welcome to Issue no. 41 of our Newsletter! Here is an inspiring paragraph reminding readers of the value of walking, written in a time before motor vehicles had taken over public space:

‘...Above all, do not lose your desire to walk: every day I walk myself into a state of well-being and walk away from every illness; I have walked myself into my best thoughts and I know of no thought so burdensome that one cannot walk away from it ... but by sitting still, and the more one sits still, the closer one comes to feeling ill ... Thus if one just keeps on walking, everything will be all right.’
(Kierkegaard, letter 1847)

1) A refresher of our basic aims as in our policy statement:

- To put across and promote walking as a means of transport
- To campaign for the safety and convenience of pedestrians
- To put pedestrians at the centre of transport issues, planning and systems
- To provide a body for the formal consultation of pedestrians when plans and decisions relating to them are made
- To be a public and campaigning voice for the interests of people who use pavements and footways

2) **Saturday September 22nd is European Car-Free Day.** OxPA is celebrating with our own demo. We will produce a leaflet and balloons, and do press-work. **On Saturday 22nd we will meet at 10.30am at Oxford railway station** to hand out our leaflets. **At 12.30pm we will walk up George Street to Broad Street where we will have a picnic (bring your own!).** For more details ring Corinne. Details will be finalised at OxPA's September meeting.

3) **Broad Street ‘improvements’.** Sadly, these do not look like improvements for pedestrians at all. Balliol College and the local traders said they did not want benches on Broad Street as **benches ‘attract unsuitable people.’** OxPA disagreed with this, but was in a minority at the July consultation meeting. Corinne suggested benches in the middle of the street, but the majority at the meeting wanted car parking, so that car parking is what is returning. **A sad step backwards for Oxford Transport Strategy.**

4) **At the same time, traffic calming is to be removed from Longwall Street.** The argument put forward by County Officers is that traffic levels have fallen on Longwall Street, and the speed cushions are crumbling as they were not done to a high enough standard. Instead of traffic calming there is to be ‘monitoring’, which is no consolation to walkers who have found the route above all less dangerous and polluted over the past two years than it had been for decades.

5) **Special Constables.** Jill and Jenny met with Special Constable Ali Gunston, to discuss the problem of people cycling on pavements. Ms Gunston gave a desperate shortage of person power as the reason for not blitzing pavement riding and using the £30 on-the-spot fine, now legally available to the police. She said they had done it once and had fined a lot of people, and that she would try to get it done again. Jill and Jenny tried to convey the feeling that pedestrians were under siege and had all but lost the battle for a little space of our own. (For example, contrary to their own advice, and without being willing to get drivers to keep to the speed limit on Woodstock Road, a new cycle lane has been painted onto the pavement north of Balton Road, and the half with the bikes on has been slightly lowered. This means that if you are pushing a wheelchair or pushchair past the telephone box outside St Edward's school, you either have to negotiate a very awkward bump, or not walk along the whole route. Typical lack of thought for walkers.)



- 6) However, a piece of good news for a change! The pavement on the south side of New Road is apparently being widened by 2-3 feet along its whole length. This must be the first true pavement widening since OxPA started!
- 7) Two website addresses for those computer literate amongst us: firstly a repeat of the 'Walking in Towns and Cities' one: <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/etrahome.htm>, and secondly the address for the National P A's excellent 'Living Streets' campaign, launched on August 27th: www.livingstreets.org.uk.
- 8) **An idea for Britain.** In Santa Monica apparently they are experimenting with rubber pavements, made out of used car tyres. There are various advantages to this, such as fewer trip falls, fewer broken bones, less car tyre waste in landfill sites, and shoes getting less worn out! We are a long way off this type of thinking in Britain, but if California can do it, there is no reason why we should not.
- 9) **Ray has some good large stickers for windscreens of pavement car parkers.** Your Newsletter Editor has lots of experience of using these, and can vouch for their effectiveness. They are simple, empowering, and a satisfying way of making ones feelings known without confrontation and without harm.
- 10) **We were very sorry to hear of the sudden death of long time OxPA member, Mrs Brayne, and send our warmest condolences to her husband, Reg.**

Our next two meetings are on Mondays September 18th, and October 15th, at 7pm in Oxford Town Hall. Please come, and bring anyone you like with you. Everybody is welcome!

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