

## OXFORD PEDESTRIANS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO. 53 SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2003

Welcome to Issue no. 53 of OXPA's Newsletter! This being summer, many walkers will have experienced the delight of walking to Oxford's railway station, on day trips or holidays. Has anybody noticed that the direct and obvious route into the station, a smooth straight incline up the left side of the bus stop area, is marked with a picture of a person walking surrounded by a red line, meaning 'No Pedestrians'? And under this is a sign ordering, 'Service Vehicles and Cycles Only'. Just as well walkers sensibly ignore these, or we'd be going through the bus stop area, polluted by vehicle fumes, and climbing the steps in the middle (or up an incline going in the wrong direction) as we are 'meant' to do.

- 1) Important news in this issue is that OXPA is moving our meetings from the third Tuesday of the month back to the third Monday of the month. This is because so many active members could not make a Tuesday evening. We will no longer be meeting in the Town Hall, as it is too expensive for us, but will be meeting in St Aldates Hall, Pembroke Street (north side, midway along), as from September this year. Time of meetings (7pm) remains unchanged.
- 2) Mr Peter Mann, who has an overview of Oxford Transport Strategy, and the Local Transport Plan (for the whole County), is coming to update us in our October meeting on OTS, and talk about walking routes into urban centres, with particular emphasis on Oxford City. He will be coming for the first half of the meeting, from 7pm. Following our last meeting with him, walking routes along Botley Road and in Jericho were investigated in detail, but as yet nothing on the ground has changed. If you would like to know where Oxford Transport Strategy is going next, and the implications for pedestrians, please come to our October meeting, with your questions and comments.
- 3) Levels of nitrous oxide in Oxford's air are still too high for safety, which means traffic on central streets will have to be reduced further if Oxford's legal obligations towards safety are to be met. Perhaps we could start with proper policing of traffic illegally driving through High Street and Cornmarket!
- 4) Oxford City Council have decided on granite benches for Cornmarket. Each bench will cost over £10,000, and will be divided into three 'seats' and a long thin 'percher'. The idea behind the design and material is that nobody will be able to sleep on the benches. By comparison wooden benches cost a few hundred pounds each, and are warmer, as well as more convenient and comfortable. On the granite benches a parent and child cannot sit side by side, and larger people will be unable to sit on them at all. At the city 'consultation' on the subject everybody was against the granite benches, but sadly the City Council are going ahead with them anyway.
- 5) East Oxford Health Walk has been identified by the hard-working team called 'Fusion', based at East Oxford Community Centre. The route is as follows: Princes St., Rectory Rd./Glebe St., St Clements, Pensions Gardens, then either the short or the long route around Angel and Greyhound Meadow, Cherwell St., London Place, and back along Glebe St. and Rectory Rd. The walks take place every Thursday from 2.30pm. The meeting place on Princes St., at the back of the Community Centre is where Fusion is based. There are approximately six people on



each walk, with two first aid trained volunteers carrying mobiles, one at the front and the other at the back of the walk. **Fusion (Oxford 245735) welcomes views and support. Particularly requested are 'art texts' to place on the walks, so any quotes or memories from any of the route are especially welcome.** It is planned to sink the texts into pavements and engrave them on walls so the walks will have an arts focus.

- 6) **OxPA has accepted with regret that Car-Free Day (Monday Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>) is not going to be marked in Oxford this year, basically because the County Council is unwilling to commit themselves to anything.** Cllr Anne Purse (a sympathetic County Councillor) replied to letters saying, "We don't want to close any roads but want to do something more general." Nothing so far has been planned, however, not even for County employees. The City Council passed a resolution in favour of doing something on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, but they do not have the energy to take on the County.
- 7) **In a televised phone-in about 20mph throughout Oxford City, 52% were in favour and 48% against.** Close, but good to see the majority would support sensible, safer speeds of vehicles driving along our residential and shopping streets.
- 8) **The importance of speaking up/writing when something is not working for walkers!** Re the crossing outside King Charles House at the junction of Park End St. and Hollybush Row, OxPA member Fiona H. took on the issue of taxi drivers frequently making illegal right turns out of the bus/taxi/bike part of St Frideswide Square into Holly bush Row. Not only were they ignoring the green pedestrian light, but they were abusing (verbally and blaring horns) pedestrians whose rights they were violating. As a result of Fiona's complaint, the County first pointed out to taxi companies the meaning of the 'Ahead Only' sign, and then replaced the sign with clearer 'No Right Turn' and 'No Left Turn' signs. The taxi problem is now resolved! **The only problem there now is, as with the majority of pedestrian crossings in Oxford, pedestrians are given far too little time to cross before the lights change.**
- 9) **Broad Street.** OxPA members have been contacted by Kim Wilkie, currently employed by Oxford Preservation Trust, with funding from both Councils and several Colleges, to do a study of Broad Street. Mr Wilkie's scheme extols the beauty of the architecture, and suggests a pedestrian square on the east end, stretching from the Old to the New Bodleian. He suggests servicing shops and the Covered Market from the west end of Broad St., with traffic going up the Broad and along the Turl. He does not address the issue of how they would exit again, but a written report follows so perhaps the transport planning issues will be in that.
- 10) **OxPA has a stall on September 6<sup>th</sup>, at the Florence Park Fun-in-the-Parks.** Please donate home bakes or jam etc., or contact Michaela (tel no. at end) to see when you could help. A great day out, and a fun way to be useful and meet people.

**Our next two meetings are on Monday September 15<sup>th</sup> and October 20<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm in St Aldates Centre, Pembroke St. Please note the change of day as from September this year. Do come and feel free to bring interested non-members. Everybody is welcome!**

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