

OSNEY ISLAND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

www.osneyisland.org.uk

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2008



**This is the last newsletter of 2008 – so a
Very Happy Christmas everybody.**

COMING UP

Coffee morning

There will be a coffee morning on **22nd November, 10am-12noon**, St Frideswide's last fundraising event for the organ before the restoration work begins after Christmas.

Hansel and Gretel

Oxford Touring Theatre Company is making its yearly visit to West Oxford Primary School with its Christmas show **Hansel & Gretel** on **Wednesday 10 December 2008, @ 7.30pm**.

Desperate times call for desperate measures! So when food is short and there are mouths to feed something's got to give. But when mum & dad leave the kids in the wood there turn out to be more questions than answers. Will the woodcutter turn out to be a man or a mouse? Will Hansel & Gretel ever find their way back home? Will the future be free-range or oven-ready? Find out in Mike Kenny's sparkling re-telling of this familiar tale of breadcrumbs and witches: it's the perfect recipe for a great night out. For tickets call 01865 724968.

Children's Christmas lantern parade

From Annabel Dunstan: The traditional Osney Island Children's Lantern Parade and carol singing will take place on **Saturday 13th December**. Meet outside the Waterman's Arms at 6pm, bring a lantern and dress warmly! Refreshments en route! Everyone welcome. If you would like to provide treats please drop a note in to me at 23 East Street or call me on 07790 216 441. Also, if you would particularly like the group to sing outside your door please let me know too. We're looking forward to the biggest turn out ever!

Christmas shopping on the Island

Fed up with seething crowds in the town centre? Tired of searching for the right present? Well, this year all your problems can be solved right here on the Island.

How about a large pot of the finest lilies?

'Casa Blanca' lilies are the purist white with deep orange stamens and flower in July, perfuming the whole garden with their delicious knockout scent. You will need 5 lily bulbs, a large, deep flowerpot (cheap as chips from Homebase) and some multi-purpose compost. Put some broken bits of pot or pebbles in the bottom of the pot. Fill the pot a third full with the compost. Place the bulbs around the edge with one in the middle and fill the pot up with compost. Firm down – and that's it! Lily bulbs are available at 50p each from Sally Roberts on 7215961/1 Bridge St.

Alternatively, you may prefer tulips. We have a few bags left over from the Food Festival with 5 bulbs each of High Society (soft orange), Havron (deep plum) and Coleur Cardinal (rich crimson) all flowering in April. 15 bulbs for £2.50 from Sally Roberts as above. A bargain!

... Or a beautifully designed local calendar?

A great idea for sending to friends and relations abroad. The calendar was produced by West Oxford Low Carbon Group and features not only wonderful photographs mainly taken on the lotties by local photographer Jane Thompson, but delicious local recipes and lots of space for busy mums to write notes, £6 and available from Eggs or the allotment shop (open on Sundays from 10-12).

... Or an exquisite Tillybag?

TILLYBAGS and friends will be selling beautifully handcrafted jewellery, handbags, scarves, lavender bags, accessories for the home and other stocking fillers on at **34 Bridge Street on Saturday 13th December @ 11am - 4pm**. Come and enjoy some festive food and drink while you browse (to view examples of some items on sale please visit www.tillybags.co.uk)

West Oxford Academy

The academy meets in the WOCCA café on Tuesdays @ 8pm for a 20 minute talks given by local people followed by discussion over a glass of wine. Tickets £1.50 on the door.

11 Nov My life as an immigration judge/Tony Talbot

18 Nov A short history of social housing/Alison Mathias

25 Nov How can we encourage the immune system to fight tumours?/Katya Simon
 2 Dec Archaeological excavations in Sark/Simon Pressey
 9 Dec Removing arcane pronunciation and grammar from English/Peter Marsh

NEWS AND VIEWS

Osney Island Food Festival

Our first food festival was a resounding success raising nearly £500 for OIRA funds including this newsletter. As one resident said, 'Osney at its best'. Thanks to contributions from local people we were able to sell a wide variety of seasonable fruit and vegetables, locally produced chutneys, jellies and jams, sweets, bread and cakes. David Giles of Binsey sold out of his apple juice and eggs, Sally Roberts and young Joe Roberts made potato farls which were so popular they sold out in an hour (see below). The mayor got annoyed because the samosas kindly made by Mrs Bi of Bridge Street went before she had a chance to buy one, people demanded the right to buy Bianca's home made red onion focaccia and Richard Lewis played impromptu jazz sax! Martyn Elgar masterminded apple bobbing, Maureen opened up her kitchen and ably helped by Doreen and Paulene, worked full out to supply tea and homemade cakes donated amongst others, by Emma and Julia. All the helpers were especially appreciative of the help we had clearing up. SO A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED AND SUPPORTED ONE OF THE BEST EVENT WE'VE HELD ON THE ISLAND.

And speaking of teas...

Maureen has six unclaimed white mugs from the Food Festival. Please call her on 244480 to pick them up.

Sally Robert's potato farls

By special request the recipe for Sally's potato farls:

You will need:

Mashed potato (preferably warm)

Plain or self raising flour (approximately in ratio of 8 oz potato/2oz flour but quantities are not critical)

Knob of butter

Salt to taste.

To make:

1 Mix well together the potato, flour, butter and salt. It should feel like soft pastry.

2 Roll out very thinly (about 5mm/1/4 inch) or less, cut into rounds or triangles.

3 Cook on both sides on a lightly oiled griddle or heavy frying pan until nicely brown. 4 Eat hot with butter or jam or fry as an accompaniment to bacon and eggs.

Low Carbon West Oxford

From Barbara Hammond: The Low Carbon West Oxford AGM is on Thursday 13th November at 5.30pm at West Oxford Community Centre. Please do come along if you would like to find out what has happened over the last year. The AGM is followed at 6-8pm by the launch of the Big Green Challenge project – again

all are welcome to come along to celebrate our success in being one of 10 national finalists. Things are moving on apace with the project:

- You may have seen us in the Oxford Times on 17th October and on the front cover of the Times Money Section on 1st November
- We now have 35 households recruited to work with us on ways of saving energy, carbon and money over the year
- The Co-op is helping by donating web-designers to us and also (we hope) some funding for the household pilots
- We are having the full design study done on the micro-hydro project at Osney Weir
- We are working with three buildings on the industrial estate and the retail estate with a view to getting their agreement to put solar panels on their roofs
- We have started talking to Oxford Brookes about wind power at their Harcourt Hill site
- West Oxford school has been awarded grant funding to put solar panels on its roof

Even if you are not one of the 35 households, you can still help us win the £1m just by joining Low Carbon West Oxford. One of the judging criteria is the number of people in the community we manage to engage over the year.

Flooding update

From Richard Thurston: Following last July's flooding the Oxford Flood Alliance (OFA) was formed - a coalition of neighborhood associations, residents' groups and other interested parties. OFA's aim is to achieve action on flood prevention and flood resilience for Oxford and the surrounding areas. The EA have now confirmed that all of the three 'pinch points' identified by us will be dealt with as part of the programme of works scheduled over the winter months. Extra culverts are being laid under the railway access road near Redbridge, a disused access bridge blocking Hinksey Stream will be removed (by Network Rail) and the silt under the railway bridge where Hinksey Stream rejoins the Thames at Kennington will be cleared, and an obstructing wall removed. All of these measures, along with the clearing of the Bullstake, Hinksey and Seacourt streams will significantly improve drainage in the floodplain west and south of Oxford, reducing ground water levels and alleviating flood risk.

Now that these measures are being implemented we have developed an outline *West Oxford Flood Plan*, which includes Earl Street, Duke Street, Bullstake Close and Osney. EA is planning a phase 2 programme of Short Term Measures (STMs) in the next financial year. We hope our suggestions will be considered when that is being decided on (in the next few months).

The flooding problems of this area are complex and deciding what to do for the best will take time involving technical evaluation, costing, and estimation of how

long it will take to achieve. While OFA has useful local knowledge and plenty of determination we recognise that in the West Oxford area only the EA have the expert resources which are needed to arrive at the best solutions. We have a good working relationship with the local Flood Risk Management Team of the EA and anticipate a productive collaboration with them, and with the City Council, in the coming weeks and months. Here on Osney, Thames Water has replaced two small pumps at the junction of South Street and West Street. A flap valve has also been installed by Thames Water at the outlet to South Street drain, which should help during lesser floods. We remain concerned about Bullstake Close, Earl Street and Duke Street. The City Council are looking at a wall to protect Bullstake Close which could also be beneficial for Earl and Duke Street. The Council's objection to development of the Kingerlee site in Lamarshe Rd was not upheld. We will be seeking a meeting with Kingerlee to try to ensure any development is sensitive to flooding issues.

We recently met with the Heads of Communication from the EA Head Office who were impressed by how organised and passionate OFA is. They were shown our visual Redbridge presentation and given copies of our ideas on West Oxford. We presented our ideas for West Oxford at the City Council's Area Committee earlier this month. We intend to arrange similar meetings with the County and Thames Water.

Oxford was very badly flooded in 1947. A flood of this magnitude, were it to occur now, would be made far worse by all the building that has gone on in the flood plain and the accumulated man-made obstructions. Not only would that make the flooding worse but there are now more properties to be flooded. About 3,000 properties were flooded in 1947. The EA estimate that over 5,400 properties are now at risk from flooding. To put this in perspective, 169 properties were affected in 2007.

The present STMs, important though they are in reducing the risk of smaller floods occurring, are not nearly sufficient to stop another 1947 flood. For that a much bigger scheme is needed. Such a scheme, the *Oxford Flood Risk Management Strategy*, is now in its final stages of preparation by the EA. Publication is expected in 2009. Perhaps, despite the economic state of the country, the suggested £150 million cost will be forthcoming. Indeed, perhaps that will paradoxically improve the chances – it would after all fit with the government's recently expressed intention of providing employment through public works. The really big Oxford flood before March 1947 happened in November 1894, a gap of 52 years. It is now 61 years since the flood of 1947. And of course the weather extremes associated with climate change make flooding more likely. It's not a matter of will it happen but when? Thinking of the costs were a 1947 magnitude flood to happen now, £150 million looks like a bargain.

We are holding a Public Meeting on November 12th, at 7.30 pm in the West Oxford Democrats Club, 1 North

Street, Osney Island, OX2 0AY. We will tell you what we have been doing and what is in store. There will be illustrated presentations and displays and plenty of time for discussion and questions. The venue is comfortable, with a bar. MPs and councillors from the City, the Vale and the County have been invited and several have already replied that they will be coming. Our last meeting was very well attended and very useful in strengthening the case for action. So, please HELP US TO HELP YOU by coming on November 12th. It should be an informative and enjoyable evening.

Christmas at St Frideswide's and Binsey

Binsey

1st December: Advent Carols, 7.30pm (wrap up warm and bring a torch!)

14th December: Christmas Carols, 3pm

25th December: Holy Communion, 9am

St Frideswide's

21st December: Christmas Carols with Junior Choir, 6.30pm

24th December: Children's Crib Service, 4.30pm

25th December: Mass of Christmas Day, 10.30am

Please contact Fr Russell on 242680 or rdewhurst@mac.com if any children would like to sing in the Junior Choir on 21st December, or any other matter.

OTHER NEWS

Beware the smiler at the door

From Anna Truelove: In mid-October I answered a knock at my door from a guy leafleting Osney on behalf of a company offering garden landscaping, building work and property maintenance. He said they were desperate for work after a wet summer.

I offered them the task of clearing my overgrown garden and they started work the following day. One of the two partners, described as both a tree surgeon and a roofer, told me that while examining the cypress at the bottom of the garden, he had noticed that my tiled pitched roof was in a bad way. From there we moved on to a quotation for replacement of all roofing, including a flat roof on a rear extension (definitely necessary, I'd been waiting since April for a roofer to do it). Later I agreed to a replacement of a number of windows at the rear (likewise necessary) and also to a new masonry coating to the rear of my house – which seemed a good idea at the time. The company needed payment in cash – and I handed over a great deal of it.

Some of the work has been OK but the initial replacement of the pitched roof was so lamentable that a friendly neighbourhood builder reported concerns to Oxfordshire County Council Trading Standards (tel: 01865 051 0845). Since then Oxford City Building Control (tel: 01865 252896) has been involved and will give me a written report on the standard of roofing before I make the final payment.

Two things I didn't know:

1 Work to re-roof or replace windows (even at the rear)

is now **notifiable in advance** to Oxford City Building Control. The householder should submit the form and building firms should be aware of this.

2 in whatever circumstances a quotation is offered and accepted – from a cold call to a meeting in the home – customers are now legally entitled to a **7 day cooling off period**. Firms offering goods and services should be aware of this and should **get a written waiver** from the customer if it is proposed to breach the 7 day limit.

So readers, be more sensible than I was: invoke the cooling-off period, take up references and get two or three alternative quotes. If in doubt call Trading Standards – and if you feel threatened or bullied call the police.

BITS AND BOBS

Calling all commuters...

Just what you need – a brand new Dahan folding bike, never used. It cost £305 but I will accept offers in excess of £225. Why am I selling it? Because I've done with commuting and am about to launch myself on the world as a novelist! Please contact Jane Thompson on 722011 or email: janelindsaythompson@mac.com

Sunlight pipes

Has anyone got and knowledge or experience of fitting or using a sunlight pipe? If so Sally Roberts on 721596 would be very pleased to hear from you.

House available to rent

Available to rent on Osney from November/December 2008, a house with three bedrooms and a small study. Please contact Jennifer Meakin on tel: 07779 654 978 or email: jennifermeakin@googlemail.com

Freebie

A Panasonic 17" screen colour TV and stand. Please contact Jill on 01865 798331.

Cleaner wanted

I am looking for good reliable a cleaner to do cleaning and ironing for two hours a week. I live on Bridge St and my mobile number is 07810 805406.

OIRA website

Calling all website designers. Is there anyone on the Island who designs websites? We desperately need a new one. If you can help please get in touch with Richard Thurston on 723663.

Births, marriages and deaths

Many congratulations to Fr Russell Dewhurst and Elaine Palser who have just announced their engagement and are planning a summer wedding. Best wishes to you both from all of us.

And congratulations to local hero Ray, our lockkeeper, and Dee who decided to get married on the day of

the food festival and were greeted to a large round of applause as they swept past East St in a motor launch. Best wishes to you both from all of us.

USEFUL NUMBERS

City Council, tel: 249811 (now 24 hours); **County Council**, tel: 792422; **County Councillors: Sushila Devi Dhall**, tel: 553415; **Alan Armitage**, tel: 516115; **City Councillors: Colin Cook**, tel: 272548 (day) 721844 (evening) email: cllrcook@oxford.gov.uk; **Susanna Pressel**, 7 Rawlinson Rd Oxford OX2 6UE, tel: 554001 email: cllrspressel@oxford.gov.uk; **Community Beat Officer PC Jan Warner**, tel: 08458 505505; refuse, recycling, free collections, bulky items, street cleaning, drains and flooding tel: 252900; **free advice on energy**, tel: 252197; **free advice on energy and home insulation**, tel: 252197; **noise complaints**, daytime tel: 252553, out of hours tel: 742138; **Community Centre** tel: 245761; **on-street fines**, tel: 247090; **car park fines**, tel: 252489; **furniture recycling**, tel: 763698; **residents parking permits**, tel: 0845 634 4466; **bike theft and abandoned bikes**, tel: 0845 8505 505; **abandoned and unlicensed vehicles**, tel: 252900.

OIRA COMMITTEE

Committee members

Bianca Elgar 15 East St tel 202977; **Stephen Lynam** 11 South St (Secretary); **Fiona McFarlane** (Treasurer) 11 South St; **Elizabeth Newbery** (Newsletter) 3 North St 793360; **Richard Thurston** 38 West Street, tel: 723663 (Chair); **Kate Stewart** 18 East St tel 241856; **Anna Truelove** 83 Bridge St 245496 (Vice Chair); **Duncan Wagstaff** (web and noticeboard) 38 Bridge St; phone 07812 125 650. The new email address for any OIRA committee member is askoira3@osneyisland.org.uk

Next Committee meeting

Next Committee meeting The OIRA committee's next meeting will take place on **October 20 @ 8pm** If you'd like to raise an issue drop in or let someone on the committee know. You can find our agenda the minutes on the Bridge Street notice board and on the website. **Next newsletter** is due out mid January 09, last date for copy **December 29**. If you would like to put an item in contact: Elizabeth Newbery 3 North St. 793360, email: elizabeth@newberyandengland.com or use the tear-off strip below.

A note on the Internet

Contributors should be aware that the newsletter is automatically posted on the Internet just as it appears in print.

Gazebo hire

Sally Roberts, 1 Bridge St, tel: 721596

Notice board

Duncan Wagstaff, 38 Bridge St; tel: 07812 125 650

Please use this tear-off strip to write down any requests for inclusion in the newsletter or concerns that you may wish Committee Members to raise at OIRA meetings. Post it through the door of any of the members listed above.

Name

Address

Tel. no.