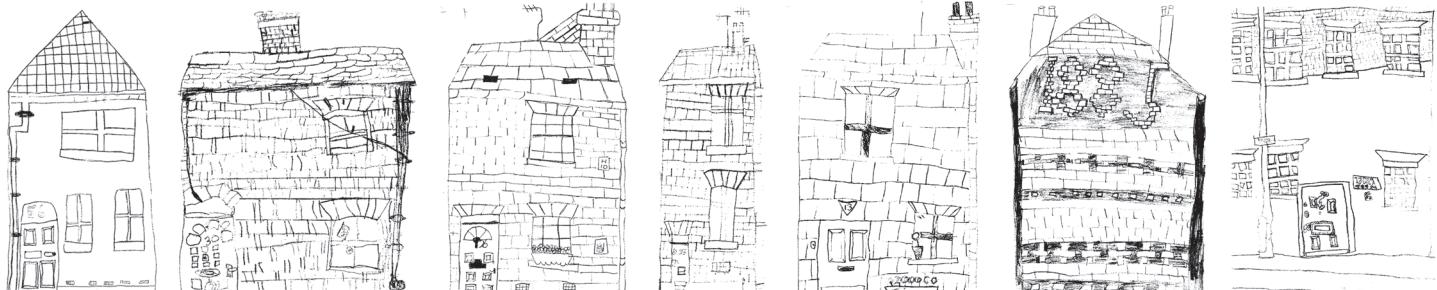


# OSNEY ISLAND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

[www.osneyisland.co.uk](http://www.osneyisland.co.uk)

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2010



Here's wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

## COMING UP

### **Osney Island children's lantern parade**

The traditional Osney Island Children's Lantern Parade and carol singing will take place on **Saturday 11th December**. Meet outside The Punter at 5.30 pm, bring a lantern and dress warmly. Refreshments are offered en route! Everyone welcome. If you would like to provide treats, please drop a note to Ben and Claudi at 50 West Street or give us a ring on 204511. If you would like the group to sing outside your door please let us know; it would be lovely to be able to welcome new arrivals - both babies, and those who have moved to the island this year!

### **School Christmas Bazaar**

The West Oxford Primary School Christmas Bazaar is on **Saturday 4th December from 11am – 1.30pm**. You can enjoy wreath making, pottery painting, meet Father Christmas, pick up home made cakes or Christmas gifts, try your luck in the tombola, guess the weight of the cake, enjoy lunch in the café and other delights.

### **Magdalen College film nights**

*From James Fry:* This term's programme of films at Magdalen College is now almost over but are still several films really worth seeing. The auditorium is by the Longwall entrance and you pay a mere £3 per evening.

Sunday, 28 November  
19:30 Crimes and Misdemeanors

Monday, 29 November  
19:00 Double Indemnity 21:00 Bound

Wednesday, 1 December  
19:00 Law of Desire 20:55 Antichrist

### **Christmas at St Frideswide**

To celebrate the Christmas season there are some special services.

*St Frideswide:* Saturday, December 11th: Children's Advent activity; open to the community

Sunday, December 12th, 10:30: Family Friendly service

Sunday, December 19th, 10:30: Bishop John will be the celebrant and preacher and we will be singing carols

Friday, December 24th, 16:00: Crib service and Christingle (children especially welcome)

Friday, December 24th, 23:00: Midnight Mass

Saturday, December 25th, 10:30: Christmas Day service

*St Margaret's, Binsey:* Sunday, December 19th, 15:00: Carol service.

Saturday, December 25th, 9:00: Christmas Mass

If you would like to receive e-mail notices of events at St Frideswide you can join the list of Friends by signing up in the church or sending an e-mail to [st.frideswide.church@gmail.com](mailto:st.frideswide.church@gmail.com)

### **Organ Concerts**

Our series of organ concerts on our newly restored Hunter Organ are continuing at St Frideswide's. They start at 7:30, and refreshments are provided. A £5 donation is suggested. The following concerts are coming up:

Thursday 25 November: Organist is Michael Harris, St Giles Cathedral Edinburgh

## NEWS AND VIEWS

In the second of our features on long term Osney Residents, Joyce Chalmers interviews Vera Miles.

Almost everyone will have seen Vera walking up Bridge or East Street. She is a great walker and although she does not have a dog now, she says that walking her dog in the past has always been one of her greatest pleasures.

Vera is one of Osney's longest residents, having moved here from Portsmouth in 1936, when she was 11 years old because her father had recently been hired into the Post Office and was given a position in Oxford. Her family consisted of her father, her mother and her brother, Bill, 17 months older than Vera. They came to Osney Island and rented the house she is still in today. Vera remarked that renting was usual in those days because very few people could afford to own their own homes.



When war broke out in 1939, Vera's father went into the military again. Vera was then 14 years old and went to work, first at a local Post Office and then for the City Council Treasury Department, where she stayed for her entire career. She did want to join the WRENS but accepted that not everyone in the family could go to war. In the end, the security she gained from her job with the council gave her the opportunity to buy her house from the landlord sometime during the 60s which was a big step for a single woman to take in those days.

Sadly, in 1980 Vera's father died and 48 hours later, so did her brother Bill. It was a sad time for herself and her mother, contending with the unhappiness of a double funeral. She said her mother never did get over the shock.

Vera, of course, like anyone who has been here so long, notes many changes here. She particularly remarked that in days gone by, everyone knew everyone (which, of course to a large degree still holds true here today). She also noted that when someone died people rallied round to give money for flowers and whatever was needed at the time. And since telephones were rare, there was a lot of popping into each other's houses, making for a different atmosphere than our present times. Since the community here boasted shops, several pubs, a bakery and an off-licence, the Island was more self sustained than today. But she agrees it is still a most lovely place to live.

#### **A word of warning**

*From Anna Truelove:* Early in 2010, I encountered a plumbing emergency: my Fordham WC cistern installed in 1973 had packed up and water was gushing out of the overflow pipe outside my back door. Given the emergency, there was no time to ring round looking for personal recommendations on plumbers, so I looked in the telephone directory for local plumbers and happened on a large ad placed by K. Barrett with an address in Dean Court, Botley. Mr Barrett offered a full range of plumbing, heating and drainage services with a discount for pensioners...

I rang the landline and explained the situation. In due course, Mr Barrett rang back and sent along two plumbers (one would have been enough) to replace the defective cistern. The charge was £470 which struck me as excessive. When I queried the bill, Mr Barrett became aggressive and demanded payment in cash.

I was unhappy with the cost and quality of the service and complained to Oxfordshire Trading Standards. I was told that Trading Standards had received a number of complaints about Mr Barrett who it seems also advertises electrical, flooring and gardening services. My conclusion is that he operates as a gang master called on a number of skilled or unskilled freelance workers. BEWARE!

The response from Trading Standards is: Don't deal on the doorstop. Never enter into a contract with someone buying, or selling goods or services at the door. Call 0845 051 0845 for advice. Trading Standards also offer a list of approved traders.

#### **Calling all allotment holders**

The Punter is thriving with plenty of reports about the good food and £5 lunches. Tom is introducing more vegetarian options and would like to hear from any allotment people with spare produce that can be offset against a meal or drinks.

#### **A good old local**

The Hollybush is maintaining its position as an old fashioned local with quizzes, fresh food, parking and a heated garden for smokers. It specialises in live music with an open mic. It also offers B&B.

#### **Accommodation wanted**

I'm moving out of my South Street house at the end of January and looking for a non-smoking house share on the Island in the New Year. If you can help, please contact Greg on 07726 314 641 gregoxford@hotmail.co.uk.

#### **Need a babysitter?**

Looking for babysitting jobs from the 31st December onwards: I am 15 years old, am currently training for my first aid certificate and speak English, German and some French. I've got two younger siblings, who I look after regularly. I also volunteered at West Oxford Primary School for my Duke Of Edinburgh as I really love spending time with children! Please call Clara on 07504 611165 or email: clara.sattentau@yahoo.co.uk

#### **Capoeira classes**

We are hoping to organise a Capoeira class (Brazilian martial art and dance) for our children and others aged 6 to 12 years old. We have found a professional teacher that lives in West Oxford. It would cost about £5/hour/child and would take place on Saturday mornings in our house on West Street either indoors or in the garden when the weather permits. After a taster lesson your child would have to commit for 6 weeks so we can cover the costs. Please e-mail katja.simon@ndm.ox.ac.uk or call 241178.

#### **New babe**

Congratulations to Sam and Tony of East St on the safe delivery of Jack, weighing in at 7lbs 13 ozs., and a brother for Hannah.

#### **Subscriptions**

*From the treasurer:* A big thanks to all who have paid the subs this year and to those who have generously given extra and/or sent nice messages too (the newsletter is warmly appreciated and quite rightly!). For those who still have the envelope lurking on the mantelpiece, it is never too late and if you can't find the envelope, any old envelope will do through the door of any Committee member. Belated news from Tea on the Towpath which did well, raising over £350. Cakes were delicious as ever, plants and recycled books/CDs were popular too. Looking forward to next year's event already!

## A BIT OF LOCAL HISTORY

### **Chimney sweeps**

From Roy Hoare; Chimney sweeps planting sooty kisses on blushing brides was once considered good luck, but now it is a custom of the past, as both parties are rather rare. No longer are the few remaining sweeps the grimy individuals with cloth cap and overalls but clinically white-coated operatives who vacuum away every smut.

Before 1864, their predecessors, the Sweep Masters and their journeymen employed climbing boys to shin up flues and brush down the soot. These climbing boys and some girls were taken into so-called apprenticeships upon payment of perhaps 5 guineas to the parents, whereupon the child would become the property of the Sweep Master. An item in Jackson's Oxford Journal of 16th Nov. 1764 shows that John Lay, apprentice to Richard Dorner, had absconded and a reward of half-a-crown (25p in today's money) was offered for his return. The article gave his full description and forbade anyone to harbour or entertain him.

The so-called apprenticeship consisted of a brief period of watching, then being thrust into the flue with an experienced boy behind; any reluctance on the part of the 'tyro' would prompt the slapping or pricking of his feet. The discomfort and horrific conditions they experienced resulted in scrapes, burns, sore eyes and constant chest infections. In their later years many suffered from cancers of the lips and scrotum, which was known as the sweeps cancer and rarely seen elsewhere.

Major accidents were commonplace. In March 1813 an eight-year-old boy named Pitt became firmly stuck in a chimney that had only recently been extinguished. After part of the chimney had been demolished, he was found to be dead and his elbows and knees had been burnt to the bone. These incidents were deemed to be accidental deaths. A law was passed in 1864 to end this horrendous practice but not without some opposition in Government. One noble enquired, 'How would I know that my chimneys were being swept properly?'

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Italians from Piedmont came to England to work as sweeps. Today, in the first week of September each year, hundreds of chimney sweeps meet at Santa Maria Maggiore in Piedmont. A brotherhood of sweeps meet to drink, and generally 'whoop it up'. A museum to their profession was opened there in 1975 and has become their Mecca. It also serves as a memorial to the many children who endured such suffering.

## THE DIRECTORY

The following list is compiled from Islanders recommendations only. No one pays for an entry and suppliers are removed if there are reports of unreasonable rates or service. The list is only as good as the updates so please let me know if anyone has retire or dropped out for other reasons.

### **New recommendations**

Washing machine repairs. Contact: Chris at Oxford

Domestic. Appointments can be booked online at [oxforddomestic.com](http://oxforddomestic.com) or telephone 01865 407494.

('Skilled, timely, user friendly with very reasonable fixed prices and no call out fee').

ACH Plasterers [info@ACHplastering.co.uk](mailto:info@ACHplastering.co.uk)  
tel: 01865 300 300 ('Did a great job and friendly, efficient too!')

## TRIED AND TESTED

### **General builder**

Chris Willis mob: 07974 155 638 does general building work/carpentry eg (re)hanging doors, laying patios, decking, associated painting/decorating, as well as kitchen/bathroom fitting 'the work was carried out efficiently and to a very high standard'); Pete Coles tel: 01865 776319 mob: 07760 327 057 also does plumbing ('reliable, helpful and reasonable rates')

### **Building and roof repairs**

Gosford Builders tel: 01865 373467 mob: 07855 373467 ('good work and very fair rates')

### **Plumbing and heating**

Ivan Kilbee tel: 01235 847527 mob: 07771 787585; ('good work and comes on time'); APV Boiler Services tel: 01865 377264 ('friendly, efficient and clean workers'); Colin Pizzie (electrics, plumbing, kitchens, bathrooms) tel: 01235 554655

### **Electricians**

RJB Electrical (rewires and new installations) tel: 01865 882723 mob: 07711 934348; J.L. Electrical (rewires, fuse boards, sockets, lights) mob: 07825 133337; CE Electrical Services tel: 01865 842598 or mob: 0778 2360 979 ('thoroughly recommended'); DEC Electricians tel: 725453 ('very good')

### **Domestic appliances**

Baldwin Appliances tel: 01865 377484 [www.baldwinappliances.com](http://www.baldwinappliances.com); RG Domestic tel: 01865 718299 mob: 0771 113 2961 ('Repairs all makes and has timed appointments including after 6pm')

### **Handyman**

Jon Butt tel: 07766 144116 ('a friend recommended him. He lives in Witney but very willing to travel to Oxford'); David Morris tel: 725875 (reasonably priced)

### **Chimney sweep**

Dennis Northcott tel: 01235 526617 ('does a good job')

### **Window cleaning**

Paul Smith mob: 0785 463 1963 ('amiable and reliable.')

### **Interior and exterior decoration**

Paul Simmons tel: 01993 852317 mob: 07803 603504 ('good clean work and reasonable costs') Dave Buckle tel: 848630 evenings ('friendly, efficient and good value'); Steve Brierty 01491 836762 mob: 0785 0357414 ('strongly recommended'); Rob Bennett mob: 0790 5819310 ('highly recommended')

### **Flooring and general carpentry**

Amazon Flooring mob: 07899 918015 ('highly recommended')

## **Sewing Services**

Jan Donley tel: 249625 upholstery (I've been pleased with everything she's done); **Belinda Cockburn** mending, making and alterations tel: 01865 250054 ('her sewing is first class'); **Ann Paver** tel: 249129 soft furnishing including drapes, curtains but not upholstery ('highly recommended')

## **Damp**

**Damprot Renovations Ltd** tel: 742144 ('have done some replastering for us on a couple of occasions and are good').

## **Apple macs**

Bill Richardson email: bill@macfaction.co.uk tel: 01993 811197 ('excellent and will come out if not too busy'); **APi Computing** tel: 01865 821536 mob: 07964 796007 ('efficient, not too costly'); Highly recommended consultant specialising in Macs. Mac Simple is based in Osney Mead tel 07974 321064 [www.macsimple.co.uk](http://www.macsimple.co.uk) ('excellent and local').

## **Oven Cleaning**

Wayne mob: 0791 7785 906 (doesn't use any chemicals)

## **Ironing services**

Creases tel: 01869 347414 ('they collect and deliver - I've used them for years')

## **Removals**

**Isis Van Man** tel: 01865 422342 mob: 07828 185884 email: [help@Isisvanman.com](mailto:help@Isisvanman.com) ('very helpful and friendly')

## **Cleaners**

Rui Nunez mob: 07907 817241 ('excellent cleaners and very reliable').

## **Hairdressers**

Highly recommended hair stylist who does your hair in the comfort of your own home! (former Art Director Mahogany and Toni & Guy) **Sally Horton** mob: 07815 445229.

## **USEFUL NUMBERS**

**City Council**, tel: 249811 (now 24 hours); **County Council**, tel: 792422; **Alan Armitage**, tel: 516115; **Susanna Pressel**, 7 Rawlinson Rd Oxford OX2 6UE, tel: 554001 email: [clrrspressel@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:clrrspressel@oxford.gov.uk); **City Councillors: Colin Cook**, tel: 272548 (day) 721844

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.

(evening) email: [clrrccook@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:clrrccook@oxford.gov.uk) and Susanna (as above); **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; **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 and Vice Chair); Suzanne Jeffrey 13 South St 247737; **Fiona McFarlane (Treasurer)** 11 South St; **Elizabeth Newbery (Newsletter)** 3 North St tel: 793360; **Richard Thurston** 38 West Street, tel: 723663 (*Chair*); **Kate Stewart** 18 East St tel: 241856; **Anna Truelove** 83 Bridge St 245496; **Duncan Wagstaff (web and noticeboard)** 38 Bridge St; mob: 07812 125 650. The new email address for any OIRA committee member is [askoira3@osneyisland.org.uk](mailto:askoira3@osneyisland.org.uk)

### **Next Committee meeting**

The OIRA committee's next meeting will take place on Wednesday 12 January at 15 East St @ 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 November, last date for copy January 30. If you would like to put an item in contact: Elizabeth Newbery 3 North St. Tel: 793360, email: [elizabeth@newberyandengland.com](mailto:elizabeth@newberyandengland.com) or use the tear-off strip below.

### **A note on the Internet**

OIRA website: [www.osneyisland.co.uk](http://www.osneyisland.co.uk) 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**

**Suzanne Jeffrey**, 13 South Street tel: 247737 email: [Suzanne@dands.org.uk](mailto:Suzanne@dands.org.uk)