

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

www.osneyisland.co.uk

March/April 2014



COMING UP

OIRA AGM

From the Chair: The most important event of year - the one and only OIRA AGM is coming up! And you are cordially invited to it! It will be held on Wednesday, 23 April, at 7.30pm in the West Oxford Community Centre. The agenda includes the usual business items, including approval of the reports by the current Chair and the Treasurer, but also the election of officers for the forthcoming year (a new chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary) as well as committee members. However, there will be also updates on various issues affecting the Island, including reports on the planned 'Jazz on the Towpath' summer event, the Osney Micro-Hydro Scheme and future flood-prevention measures. Children are most welcome! ...and for those who make it to the AGM, there will be wine and nibbles!

Please note: Each officer and each committee member is elected for a term of one year. If you would like to stand as a committee member or officer, please make sure that you submit your name to the secretary, Steve Lynam (11 South St, tel:201334) no later than 14 days prior to the AGM. Please give your contact details and the position for which you would like to stand, together with the names of a proposer and a seconder, both of whom must live on the island. OIRA is your association, so please come along and help to shape the future direction of your community.

Osney Island Boat Club AGM

From Simon Stublings: The Osney Island Boat Club was formed about 14 years ago to enable Island residents to store boats. The 2014 Annual Meeting will be held in the Punter@ 8:00pm on Wednesday 9 April. The formal purpose of the meeting is to elect officers, approve accounts, and fix club subscriptions for the coming year. The meeting is nevertheless an opportunity for members and prospective members of the Club to get together, enjoy a drink and savour the prospect of a scintillating summer on the river. Unfortunately, our boat shed can only accommodate a limited number of craft. However, a couple of these belong to the Club and are available for use by members, so non-boat owners are catered for as well. All are welcome.

WOBFest

From David Jeffrey: On the evening of Saturday June 21 the Community Centre will play host to the annual West Oxford Beer Festival (or WOBFest, as we like to

call it). Now in its fourth year, this mini-festival will feature a range of local ales, with other refreshments and entertainment. As we get closer to the date more details, including the full list of beers, will be posted on our website: www.wobfest.co.uk In previous years WOBFest has been a great success, bringing together local residents for an enjoyable evening, whilst raising money for local causes. Tickets for this year's WOBFest will go on sale from the first of April, priced five pounds each. Your ticket gains you entry to WOBFest, and the price includes a commemorative pint glass for you to keep. Entrance will be by ticket only. You will be able to purchase tickets from local outlets and from our volunteers (look out for our posters when they go up!) or by contacting us direct by emailing: david@wobfest.co.uk Alternatively you can send us a message via our Facebook page (just search for WOBFest). If you click on the "like" button you will get all our updates. Please also get in contact if you are interested in helping out - selling tickets, pouring pints, or by becoming a beer sponsor, either corporate or individual. Without our sponsors and volunteers WOBFest would not be possible. We look forward to seeing you and your friends for what promises to be another great evening.

ISLAND NEWS

Meeting with MP and Thames Water

From Richard Thurston: On Friday 28th February, I met with our MP, Nicola Blackwood, Barry Russell from the Environment Agency (EA) and three members of Thames Water (TW). The focus of the meeting was on TW's response during the flood events in January and February. Prior to the meeting, I had invited comment from a number of residents on Osney via a survey. From that and emails and phone calls, I was able to say that residents across West Oxford reported the following:

- Having to travel to a shop in the city centre to use a toilet
- Sewage in rear garden
- Unpleasant smells from toilets
- Toilets taking longer to flush
- Sewage discharging into the street
- Inconsistent approach to clean-up - sewage in garden cleared by TW in January, but not in February
- Inability to allow children into the garden because of problems with sewage
- Poor investigation by TW of complaints, overall

apparent lack of willingness to do anything about the problems with sewers being overwhelmed by flood water, despite no obvious cause of floodwater

- Problems were reported in the following streets: Bridge Street, West Street, East Street, Duke Street, Earl Street, Alexandra Road, Botley Road, South Street.

I said that the above problems were unacceptable. We looked at one specific problem. The foul sewer from Osney Mead on to Bridge Street appeared to be filling the foul sewer on Osney Island. I asked that this flow be switched off and was told that this wasn't possible, as it would make matters worse (not for people in a wholly residential area, I said) and asked for a tanker to pump out the excess. TW and the EA discussed this and agreed that it could represent a solution. TW agreed that they needed to communicate far better and look at each problem area across West Oxford. I would encourage anyone who had a problem to tell TW. They will be collecting data which will be available over the next couple of months.

Rainfall Records

From Simon Stubbs: One of the many duties of the Osney Lockkeeper is to maintain a daily log of the amount of rain falling at the lock. Ray Riches has details going back to 1975. Interesting facts emerge:

- The wettest year since 1975 to 2013 was 2012 (979.00mm)
- The driest was the previous year, 2011 (438.90mm)
- The average annual rainfall is 650.20mm
- In terms of decades, the 1980's showed the least fluctuation with only one year varying from the average by more than 10%
- The decade with most fluctuations has been that to 2009 when seven years varied by more than 10%: five wetter and two drier. However we don't have full records for the 1970's. Each of the five years recorded in that decade varied by more than 10% from the average, three being wetter and two drier.
- The present decade holds the record for the most extreme variations. 2011 was more than 30% drier than average and 2012 more than 50% wetter than average.
- In terms of monthly precipitation the wettest has been June 2012 (148.00mm) and the driest, April 1984 (1.20mm).
- July 2007, which is remembered as the month of the Big Flood, recorded a puny 112.70mm making it only the tenth wettest month on record. However most of that rain fell within 24 hours.

Although there are variations on a year by year basis, over the period there is surprisingly little monthly variation. On average the wettest month is October (66.90mm) and the driest, February (43.82). December apart (65.31mm), the average for all the other months is within 15% of the norm.

The rainfall for January 2014 (136.50mm) makes it comfortably the wettest January on record. The nearest contender was January 1995 (114.60).

If one takes the winter months as December, January

and February the wettest has been 2013-14 (323mm against the average (168.85mm). The next wettest was 1990-91 (301.20). The driest was 1975-76 (62mm).

There is a further dimension to this data. Political theorists will be reassured to note that the least "wet" Prime Minister was Margaret Thatcher (average of 620mm a year during her term of office). The "wettest" was Tony Blair (695mm). The most volatile has been the current coalition.

Over to the statisticians!

2Last thoughts on the floods

From Jane Buekett: As the flood waters drain away and the political point-scoring goes on, it is worth reflecting on how this winter's floods were managed. River levels in early January were similar to those in July 2007, but the experience for Osney residents was quite different. This time:

We did not have several feet of water in South Street and Bridge Street extension. The Environment Agency (EA) pump kept the streets dry.

Demountable barriers in West and East Streets were far more effective and reassuring than hastily-deployed sandbags.

The work done by the EA to clear streams of debris, build culverts, and open up the flow of water at Redbridge meant that water didn't back up in Osney and Botley.

The City Council, EA and other agencies worked well together to protect properties in a planned, organised way.

The police did not try to force local residents to move out in the middle of the night, and their roadblock allowed us access to our homes.

Although water got into a few houses, many that were flooded in 2007 escaped.

Flooding is horrible, and as Richard Thurston pointed out in the last newsletter, we do need the Western Conveyance. But we should be appreciative of all the work that made this year's experience much better than it might have been.

St Frideswide

Choir looking for new members

One of the joys of the Sunday services at St Frideswide's church is the music. We are very fortunate to have a talented choir that contributes so much. If you would like to join in, please contact Paul Spencer-Longhurst at spencerlonghurst@btinternet.com. A short practice takes place on a Sunday morning from 10.00-10.25 am.

Regular Services

St Frideswide

Every Sunday 10.30am ~ 11.30am: Sung Eucharist.

First Sunday of the month is a special children and families' service, with children's hymns

St Margaret's, Binsey

First Sunday of each month, 9.00am: Said Eucharist.

Every Sunday, starting in April, 4:30pm: Evensong

Holy Week and Easter

Maundy Thursday (April 17th) 7:00pm at St Frideswide's
Good Friday (April 18th) 2:00pm at St Fridewide's
Easter Sunday (April 20th) 10:30am at St Frideswide's

Events

Mondays 10 March–14 April 2014 at 8.30, Lenten Study Group. Details can be found at [www.stfideswideschurch.org.uk/pdf/events/2014/lenten_study_2014.pdf](http://www.stfrideswideschurch.org.uk/pdf/events/2014/lenten_study_2014.pdf)

BITS AND BOBS

B&B?

From Pauline Martin: Is there B&B on Osney? Really? Chatting with a neighbour the other day, she said 'Loads of people do B&B here on Osney' and I was amazed. We could use this several times a year, for overflow, if we knew where it's available, so please can you reveal who you are if you exist? I know the Directory in the newsletter is for recommends and not self-advert, but could the editor get round that somehow to give us some contact details? I'm looking forward to the follow-up issue already!! 01865 250870/07802390914 *See Blow your own trumpet.* Ed

WOSPAS

West Oxford Studio Pottery Appreciation Society meets every couple of months or so to visit potters' workshops, museum collections and exhibitions and sometimes to admire each others' pots. Our next trip will be in April/May. If you would like to join us email elizabeth@newberyandengland.com for details of the next trip.

USEFUL NUMBERS

City Council, tel: 249811 (now 24 hours); **County Council**, tel: 792422; **Susanna Pressel**, 7 Rawlinson Rd Oxford OX2 6UE, tel: 554001 email: clrspressel@oxford.gov.uk; **City Councillors: Colin Cook**, tel: 272548 (day) 721844 (evening) email: cllrccook@oxford.gov.uk and Susanna (as above); **Community Beat Officer PC Jan Warner**, tel: 101; refuse, recycling, free collections, bulky items, street cleaning, drains and flooding tel: 252900; **free advice on energy**, tel: 252197; **noise complaints**, tel: 249811; **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, abandoned bikes, abandoned and unlicensed vehicles**, tel: 101.

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. Nevertheless, Islanders especially newcomers often like to tell other about their services so we are starting a new spot 'Blow your own trumpet' where you can do just that. If your services is then independently recommended it will go in Tried and Tested . First up...

Blow your own trumpet

My name is Flavia Catena, I am a new resident in Osney Island. I moved from Italy nine months ago

after finishing my studies, and here I am working as a freelance photographer. I am specializing in portrait, fashion and event photography, and I have a solid background as reporter as well. If you want to know about my work, please visit the website www.flaviacatenaph.com <<http://www.flaviacatenaph.com>> .

New entries

Paul Selden is a house painter who does a professional job done with no fuss at good price and for those who mind about such things (and who doesn't?). He's scrupulously punctual and easier to have around the house than many of my guests. Unreservedly recommended. Telephone: 077 277 59996 Email: paulseldendecorating@gmail.com

TRIED AND TESTED

The list is only as good as the updates so please let me know if anyone has retired or dropped out for other reasons.

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 mainly plumbing but also building ('reliable, helpful and reasonable rates'); R.P. Lepper building specialist, carpentry and joinery tel: 01993 882522 mob: 07801 36 4817 ('excellent, experienced workmanship'); Mark Mavrommatis tel: 07970 974792 to install new windows, repair old ones, paint. (He did an excellent job and at the moment is very reasonably priced because he is re-establishing himself in the Oxford area').

Building and roof repairs

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

Plumbing and heating

Plumbing and heating: Aquatic tel: 01865 749999 mob: 07050 011884 (highly recommended); 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 (electronics, plumbing, kitchens, bathrooms) tel: 01235 554655; J Smith tel: 01993 778244, mob: 07790 961395 ('reliable, competent and cheerful')

Tiling

Floors/Bathrooms/Kitchens: Nick Barker mob: 07810 356710. Excellent workmanship and extremely reliable, thoroughly recommended.

Kitchen fitters

Benchmark kitchens (helpful kitchen designers with good range of products) tel: 01865 372372; Jashim Hussain of Ultragranite, www.ultragranite.co.uk, tel: 01865 407555. ('I really cannot recommend the company highly enough.)

Electricians

RJB Electrical (rewires and new installations) tel: 01865 882723 mob: 07711 934348; DEC Electricians tel: 725453 ('very good'); Baldwin Appliances all white

goods tel: 01865 377484 www.baldwinappliances.com; www.tbarneselectrical.com tbarneselectrical@gmail.com ('very efficient, reliable and punctual').

Handyman

Jon Butt tel: 07766 144116 (lives in Witney but very willing to travel to Oxford'); Oliver tel: 0791 900 2222 Oxford-based. Reasonably priced and highly recommended; Andrew Russell ('highly recommended handyman, painting and decorating and garden maintenance') tel: 01865 453497 mob: 07977 837675

Locksmith

Davies Hardened Security tel: 01865 371816 mob: 07711 625092 ('a rapid response within 24 hours')

Chimney sweep

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

Interior and exterior decoration

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, Steve mob: 07899 918015 ('highly recommended')

Upholstery and sewing services

Ann Paver tel: 249129 soft furnishing including drapes, curtains but not upholstery ('highly recommended'); Sewing, repairs and alterations: Maria Skoyles tel. 01865 721460 mob: 0759 0264 246 ('highly recommended').

Damp

Damprot Renovations Ltd tel: 01865 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: 01865 376100 ('excellent and will come out if not too busy'); Mac Simple is based in Osney Mead tel: 01865 580886 mob: 07974 321064 www.macsimple.co.uk ('excellent and local'); API Computing contact Andy mob: 07964 796007.

Oven Cleaning

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

Removals

Isis Van Man tel: 01865 422342 mob: 07828 185884 email: help@Isisvanman.com ('very helpful and friendly'); Removals (home/abroad) and storage House and Carriage tel: 01608 811444 mob: 07769 585988 (local, reliable, polite, careful, and stress-free, for a reasonable price!)

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; Nadine Wright ('ex-Mahogany, cheerful and comes to my home on a Tuesday') mob: 07824 660184.

Gardening Services

Oxford Garden Solutions tel: 01235 201823 mob: 0755 498 7911 ('excellent tree surgery at fair rates - and they cleared up well afterwards'); David Morris tel: 01865

725875 (gardening maintenance and some diy); Eric Bake mob: 07591 157 180 former head gardener at Shotover Estate does garden maintenance and carpentry e.g building and repairing sheds and greenhouses fencing etc (very reasonable rates)

Logs

Logsforall.co.uk offer two sizes of seasoned, sustainably sourced, local, mess free logs, delivered free, the smaller size of log ideal for smaller woodburners/fireplaces. Not the cheapest but excellent burning and reliable delivery service, strongly recommended.

Bicycles

Jon Wyver: bicycles and accessories. He will deliver and pick up in Oxford free of charge. Efficient, friendly and reliable Excellent prices. mob: 07842 901873 email: info@oxbicycles.co.uk www.oxbicycles.co.uk

Thai massage, Chinese bodywork & acupuncture

Elizabeth Elliott mob: 07866 759669, offers treatment in her home on Osney. ('Highly recommended: one massage session with her is so relaxing, it's like a two-week holiday.')

Boilers

Jamie Cooke Tel: 07775 700300 email: JC.Electrical@hotmail.com ('excellent service')

Lighting

Oxford Lighting and Electrical Solutions Culham No1 Site, Station Rd, Abingdon OX14 3DA tel: 01865 408522 ('an immense range of light fittings and qualified electricians to install').

Computer Tutor

Judy Dendy specialises in clear and simple help for people who hate computers and didn't grow up with them. Lessons and basic troubleshooting in language you can understand at your own pace. No question is too daft. 07554 660468 www.computerdendy.co.uk. Highly recommended – very friendly and helpful.

Contemporary Lifestyle Photography

Individuals or sibling groups- in the relaxed setting of your home. Also available for events and graduation. See benrobinsonphoto.com for more details, or call 07414 215915.

Conservatories

an excellent specialist service for conservatories - a full valet clean, just the roof panels, or they'll restore older, out of guarantee models. www.sunshine-conservatories.co.uk tel. 01844 213868.

Baby kit

Short or long rental (strongly recommended) www.babycomes2.co.uk tel: 01235 280081

Wood burning stove fitters

Lee Hill Fireplace Installer tel: 01865 787 940 - HETAS approved. ('Really helpful and knows his stuff')

Next Committee meeting

The OIRA committee's next meeting is Wednesday, 14th May, 8pm in The Punter. If you'd like to raise an issue drop in or let someone on the committee know.