

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

December flooding

Simon Collings (Oxford Flood Alliance), South Street
We are getting used to the nearby fields and allotments flooding each winter. But on Christmas Day the water rose unusually fast. Normally it comes up over a period of days – this time it happened in hours. The cause was the huge volume of water coming down the Cherwell, pushing water back up the Thames, combined with high rainfall in the upper Thames catchment.

The river rose higher than at any point last winter, but was still about 30 cm lower than January 2014. The work done over the last decade to improve flood management in Oxford (see <https://oxfordfloodalliance.org.uk/about/>) ensured that, despite the high river levels, we had no water in the streets, or property flooding. Winters are predicted to become wetter and wetter. This event was a reminder of why we need the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

You can sign up for flood warnings at:
www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings

The EA Osney Depot

Lisa Craddock, Environment Agency

Osney Yard Depot is a workshop and office for EA operational teams. It is home to flood-response teams, engineers who maintain flood defence and navigation structures, and experts in biodiversity and environmental improvement. At 'normal' working times around 80 people will be on the site. The depot celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019.

The new lock gates that came down Bridge Street in November had been crafted by the skilled carpenters and mechanical fitters who work in the yard. These rare skills are among the many needed for maintaining and building structures such as embankments and weirs. During flooding and environmental incidents our operational teams work to protect as many homes and businesses as possible.

All our work is carried out with sustainability in mind. This has been particularly important over the last year as everyone tries to make the most of their local environment. It will continue to be at the top of our agenda. If you'd like to know more about our plans to improve and protect the natural environment visit:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan

Thanks from the EA

Carl Edwards, project manager

Many thanks to Osney residents for your help last November in allowing our HGV clear access along Bridge Street. This enabled us to collect and install one set of lock gates at Days Lock near Dorchester.



▲ Oatlands Park on New Year's Eve

We are now planning the collection of the next set, and will again be asking for your help to keep the route clear. When the date is confirmed (likely to be week beginning 22 February), we will again write to Bridge Street residents, put up notices, and request a parking amnesty from the council so you can park elsewhere on the island. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me: carl.edwards@environment-agency.gov.uk

Giving it away

More than ever before, over the last year, islanders have used the email group to give away items they no longer need. From books and yet more books, to beds and bottle-racks, where does it all go? When I put this to the group, those who responded said they appreciated both being able to find a home for unwanted possessions, and the useful items they had acquired:

'I think we have a brilliant community and...the giveaways are an example of this, reducing waste and promoting sustainability.'

'I've been really grateful that some items...are finding their way to other children who will enjoy them.'

If you are worried about where your giveaways will end up, the advice is to 'arrange and collect' rather than leaving them on the street. And there's a suggestion that the 'first come first served' approach favours those with time and hand-held internet access. It might be better sometimes to hold items for a set period and then pick a recipient at random, or according to need.

Working life

Two islanders outline what they do for a living.

Sam, foster carer

I'm a parent and child foster carer, one of only a handful in Oxfordshire. This involves mums (usually) and their babies coming to live with us, initially for 12 weeks.

During their stay I offer support and encouragement, particularly to first-time mums who are sometimes discharged straight from hospital into my care. This

may also be their first time away from home, which in itself is quite daunting. My aim is to make them feel as comfortable as possible, and build trust so that I'm able to help with the nurture and attachment between mum and baby.

As well as helping with the babies, I may also need to support the mums with their emotional wellbeing, personal and domestic skills, eating disorders, mental health issues or relationships.

At the end of their time with us hopefully they move on together — to assisted living, back to the family home or to live independently until professional support is no longer needed.

For more on becoming a foster carer, search for 'Oxfordshire County Council fostering'.

Douglas Fry, West Street, corporate photographer Piranha Photography has been based on West Street for over 10 years. We specialise in commercial and advertising photography and normally work on about 300 commissioned photo shoots per year, predominantly in London but also around the UK and Europe.

We do shoots for smaller entrepreneur start-ups through to large projects for FTSE 100 companies. Locally I take portrait and environmental photographs for scientists, university professors and schools in Oxford, to appear on their websites and in marketing.

As a company we've been established for over 25 years. Douglas is the principal photographer and Samantha the project manager who handles daily enquiries and post-production. The work is very varied and it's impossible to second-guess where the next photo shoot might take us.

www.piranhaphotography.com and douglas@piranhaphotography.com

Advent calendar 2020

Although we weren't able to socialise this Christmas, Debbie Hall's idea of an Osney Advent calendar was a lovely way to celebrate and keep in touch throughout December. Thanks to Debbie for organising it all and photographer Flavia Catena of South Street for her photos.

Flavia writes: As someone having to live through this pandemic, and the Christmas time, away from my family, I found the idea of launching a live Advent calendar event a thoughtful and important one. Then, photographing not only the windows used to showcase art pieces and festive decorations, but also some of the creators behind them, I realised how being part of such a close and generous community has inspired feelings of hope and



▲ Sebastian of Bridge Street with his Advent picture and friend Summer

gratitude among all Osney's residents. From the children and the families, to elderly people and those living alone, I was pleased to see how such an event was able to bring excitement and hope. I can't think of anything we need more than that right now, and I want to thank everyone who shared their own feelings and wishes with me, smiling at my camera or simply allowing me, like all of us, to enjoy their art. <https://www.flaviacatenaph.com>

The Oxford vaccine

Piper Griffin, Bridge Street

Back in May I wrote about working on the Oxford AstraZeneca COVID vaccine. Now we have a vaccine! My input has been relatively minor. I 'monitor' the running of the trial, look at all the volunteers' data (medical history, blood results etc.) and check for safety and compliance with the protocol. Normally I would go into the hospitals running the trial to conduct monitoring visits. However, like most people, I'm now at home looking through data online while my daughter pretends to be a sheep under my desk.

Even though the vaccine has been approved we continue to monitor the safety of all our volunteers and there are new cohorts of participants. For example, I've recently been monitoring the study with HIV-positive volunteers to make sure it is safe for them.

When I started helping on the vaccine trial, I did not think how it would feel working on something that so many people are talking about. Usually people aren't that interested in what I do. It's been interesting to hear peoples' views and at times shocking to read the conspiracy theories. For more about the trial, go to this paper in *The Lancet*: <https://tinyurl.com/y6pgqovo>

COVID: local support

A reminder that support is available to anyone who needs help with shopping and other supplies, posting mail, or just a friendly voice on the phone.

Contact Sian Allen in the first instance to ask for or offer help: 48 West Street, 07549 892914, sianallen41@gmail.com

Allotments

Jude Carroll, East Street

Back at Christmas, floods reminded us that what seemed secure can wash away (as if we needed such lessons at the end of 2020). Yes, new plot holders were surprised and disheartened. The WhatsApp group sent each other photos of flooded greenhouses and pleas for return of raised beds. One wailed, 'OMG! Does this happen every year?'

But warm(ish) weather also returns every year, and a 'pick-yourself-up' mentality spreads. Hopefully river silt has improved soils, helped worms thrive and prompted clear-outs of washed-up drifts of plastic. I won't forget being shut off by winter, floods and lockdown. I missed the mindfulness of doing little jobs right here, right now, missed the salad greens and the serendipity of discovering an overlooked potato, missed the chats with neighbours, missed the wide sky and the sunsets. Above

all, I missed focusing on the future. I hope others discover that now, too. We all need it in 2021.

Art on Osney

A small group of artists living in Osney (not just the island) have got together to raise awareness of the area's vibrant artistic voice. We are currently seven members producing paintings, ceramics, textiles and works on paper. We continue to thrive despite COVID, Zooming once a month and planning events for when this beastly virus is over. If you would like to join please contact Elizabeth Newbery: elizabeth@newberyandengland.com

St Frideswide's Church

The church is holding Sunday in-person services at 8.30 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. for the time being. For up-to-date information please see the benefice website: osneybenefice.org.uk

Update from Susanna Pressel

Please remember that the City and County Council both have money from the government to help people on low incomes who have extra costs because of the pandemic. If we might be able to help, please phone 01865 249811, or look at www.oxford.gov.uk, or phone me: 01865 554001.

The May elections might be postponed, but in case they are not, please consider applying for a postal vote, so that you don't need to leave your home unnecessarily.

In the next newsletter I hope to include information on, among other topics, progress with the new flood channel, a new tree for East Street, plans for widening the rail bridge over Botley Road and building a new western entrance to the station, and EV charging points. If you don't want to wait until then, or if you have other concerns, you are welcome to get in touch at any time.

Recipe: Buddha-style pak choi and tofu

Chelsea Yang Zhou, West Street

A simple, home-cooking Chinese recipe that symbolises serenity (serves 4).

4 pak choi

1 large firm tofu

2 garlic cloves

1 tsp sesame oil (optional) to garnish

Peel and roughly chop the garlic cloves.

Chop the pak choi into 3 cm chunks, separating the white bits from the green leaves.

Drain and cut the tofu into 3 cm cubes.

Heat 1 tsp of vegetable oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the garlic and stir fry until fragrant.

Add the white bits of pak choi and stir fry until they begin to look slightly opaque, turn the heat down to medium and add the green bits. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes.

Add 1/4 cup of water (or vegetable stock) to the pan, add the tofu and turn the heat up until boiling. Simmer with a lid on for 5 minutes, season with salt, garnish with sesame oil and serve with cooked rice.

Sad news

Two of the longest-term Osney residents have sadly died, both on 19 January. To read more tributes and memories from islanders go to: <https://osneyisland.org.uk/news/>

Bill Bowell, who has died aged 87, had lived for 60 years in their Bridge Street home with his wife Edna. She died in December 2019. Bill worked as a chef when younger, and is remembered in Osney for his friendliness, for delivering the *Oxford Mail* and *Times* door-to-door, and for famously swimming with dolphins off the coast of Ireland to help with his depression.

Annette Steele died in Sobell House Hospice after a short illness, just a month before her 82nd birthday. Annette was born in the East Street house where she lived her whole life, for the last four decades with her beloved husband Ron, who passed away 2 years ago. She was a much-loved, kind neighbour with amazing stories of island life. Annette is survived by her son Barry (who had cared for her since Ron's death), and four grandchildren, of whom she was very proud.

Some more history of the Democrats

Did you know that the man who built what is now the Democrats Club was the owner of a notorious tallow factory in Jericho? Local historian Mark Davies enlightens us at: <https://osneyisland.org.uk/democrats-club>. Mark is also a contributor to the My Jericho talks – search on YouTube for 'My Virtual Jericho'.

Directory of local suppliers

This list is compiled from islanders' recommendations only. Suppliers are removed if there are reports of unreasonable rates or service. The list is online at: osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers

Local shops and services are listed at:

osneyisland.org.uk/local-shops-and-services

Please contact Jane Buekett to submit additions or changes.

Baby kit

Baby kit for hire: 01235 28008, www.babycomes2.co.uk

Babysitter

Clementine: 07305 524076

Bicycles, repairs and accessories

Jon Wyver: 07842901873, info@oxbicycles.co.uk, www.oxbicycles.co.uk (will deliver and pick up in Oxford free of charge).

Building and roof repairs

Rob Cassettari, North Hinksey Builders: 01865 242312/07977 152884/07900 881511, robnhc@virginmedia.com

Everest Roofing Ltd: 01865 8816856, enquiries@everestroofing.co.uk

Brian French: 07957 315303 (local general builder and plasterer: takes on small jobs)

Paul Hackett, P & R Roofing Ltd (Horspath): 01865 875523, info@prroofingoxford.co.uk, www.prroofingoxford.co.uk

Mark Mavrommatis: 07970 974792 (installs new windows, repairs old ones)

Tim Mera, KM Builders Oxford: 01865 608 649, 07462 971475, k.mbuildingservices@yahoo.com, kmbuildersoxford.co.uk

Oxford Roofing and Maintenance: 01865 820323, 07468 429000, oxfordroofingandmaintenance.co.uk

Richard S. Pocock: 07766 026648 (general builder)

Mike Shepheard, MJ Construction (Abingdon): 07834 321274, mjconstruction@hotmail.co.uk (larger jobs)

Car repairs and MOTs

Oxon Autos in Grove near Wantage (will come to you): 07899 762 949, oxon.autos@live.co.uk, oxonautos.co.uk

Cat sitting/feeding and dog walking

Shirley Gibson (also housework, shopping, companionship): 07510 991213 (Binsey)

Chimney sweep

Martin Simmonds: 07762 816185, enquiry@ashlogs.com, www.ashlogs.com (also supplies ash logs)

Cleaners

C&S Cleaning Services: 01865 872395, 07824 159855

Computers

Bill Baxter, The Animated Laser Company: 07774 412944 (noon to midnight, Old Marston), bill@animatedlaser.co.uk

Judy Dendy: 07554 660468, www.computerdendy.co.uk (lessons and basic troubleshooting)

Bill Richardson: 01865 376100, bill@macfaction.co.uk (Macs)

Mac Simple: 01865 580886/07974 321064, www.macsimple.co.uk

Damp

Damprot Renovations Ltd: 01865 742144

Domestic help

See Cat sitting.

Electricians

Baldwin Appliances: 01865 377484, www.baldwinappliances.com

Jamie Cooke: 07775 700300, JC.Electrical@hotmail.com

DEC Electricians: 01865

725453, mail@decoxford.co.uk, www.dec-oxfordltd.co.uk

RJB Electrical: 01865 882723/07711

934348 (rewires and new installations)

Mark Morris (Botley): 07970 342375 (also plumber)

Exterior and interior decorators

Rob Bennett: 0790 5819310

Steve Brierty: 01491 836762/0785 0357414

Dave Buckle: 01865 848630

Dan Driscoll: 07934 718788, danieldriscoll63@gmail.com (also home repairs)

Sam Gordon: 07976 516941 (plasterer)

Andrew Turner: 07591 491 804 (repaints masonry, front doors and windows)

Flooring and general carpentry

Steve, Amazon Flooring: 07899 918015

Jonathan Everett, Lockwood Carpentry: 07597 952381, j.everett.lwc@gmail.com

Footcare in your home

Kate Reid: 07952 127534

Fresh fish

Kim: 07806 602776 (Cleethorpes, delivers to the island about 6 p.m.)

Gardening services

David Morris: 01865 725875 (gardening maintenance and some diy)

Ben Renals-Wells: 07891 422574

Jason: info@oxfordgardenservices.co.uk (tree surgery)

Green builders and installers

Energy My Way: 0845 371 3181, www.energymyway.co.uk

JoJu Solar: 0800 0542 977, www.jojusolar.co.uk

Next Generation Renewable Energy Ltd: 01993 810130, office@ngre.co.uk

Gutter clearing

Ben's Gutters: 0800 9173157/07778 240161, info@bensgutters.com, www.bensgutters.com

Handymen

Andrew Russell: 01865 453497/07977 837675 (painting, decorating and garden maintenance)

Home hairdressers

Sally Horton: 07815 445229

Nadine Wright: 07824660184

Barry: 01865 400717/07860 895364

Locksmith

Davies Hardened Security: 01865 371816/07711 625092

Logs

Logs for All: 0845 269 0306, www.logsforall.co.uk

Newsagent delivering to Osney

Mr Patel, Court Candy Shop, 65 Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HJ: 01865 515506/07917 990029, courtcandyshop@googlemail.com

Oven cleaning

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

Pests

Avenge: 02865 246195/078 79405060 (based in Binsey)

Plumbing and heating

APV Boiler Services: 01865 377264

Byron Morris, Avid Heating (boiler repairs etc.): 07899 629629, 01865 703303, www.avidheating.co.uk

Jules Jones (formerly Smith): 01993 778244/07790 961395,

reallygoodplumbing@outlook.com

Ivan Kilbee: 01235 847527 /07771 787585

Mark Morris, Botley: 07970 342375 (also electrics)

Milton and Swan: 07779 992115,

www.miltonandswan.com (all-female plumbing, tiling, bathrooms)

Remloc Plumbing and Heating: 01235 536345 (Abingdon)

Removals

A. G. Jacob and Sons: 07977 963929, www.agjacobandsons.co.uk

House and Carriage: 01608 811444/07769 585988

Sewing services

Elizabeth Feast: 01386 861010 (loose covers)

Maria Skyles: 01865 721460/0759 0264 246 (sewing, repairs and alterations)

Stonework surfaces and tiles

Jashim Hussain of Ultragranite: 01865 407555, www.ultragranite.co.uk

Window cleaning

Mark Jennings: 01865 848904/07773 159198

Michael Temple: 07983 767075, michaeltemple1@outlook.com

Windows

Oxford Refurbished Sash Windows, John: info@sashrefurbcompany.co.uk (refurbish the wooden frame and insert double-glazed panels)

Wood-burning stove fitters

Heatstore in Charlbury: 01608 819088, www.heatstoreltd.co.uk (for Defra approved wood and coal burners)

Lee Hill: 01865 787 940 (HETAS approved)

OIRA info

Bridge Street noticeboard

To display something on the noticeboard (no larger than A5) contact Julia Marsh julia.marsh@btconnect.com or put it through her door at 26 Bridge Street.

Osney email list

To join the residents' email list, moderated by Alison Burdett, contact: osiramanager@gmail.com

Welcome pack

New to the Island? Contact Jude Carroll, 10 East St, 01865 793247 for a free welcome pack.

OIRA committee

Alison Burdett alison.burdett@gmail.com (email list), Joyce Chalmers 07837 127883, Maureen Ergeneli 07816 580990,

Alan Goodwin (chair) 07765 034918 alan@alangoodwin.co.uk, Elie Harris

gekh2@yahoo.co.uk, Robert Lawrence 01865 428323, Jennifer/Nick Meakin (secretary) jennifermeakin@gmail.com,

Elizabeth Newbery 01865 793360 elizabeth@newberyandengland.com,

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