

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

Thanks to the email group...

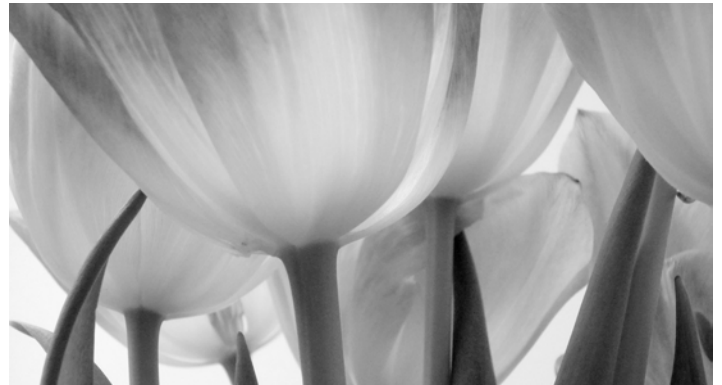
When I asked for the loan of a wetsuit, Helen in Bridge Street kindly lent me her son's old suit. I was very grateful to have it with me on my college reading party to Cornwall. Staying at Lamledra House near St Austell, we worked in two focused sessions a day, broken up with a trip to the beach in the afternoons. The wetsuit helped me easily outlast all my friends who were not similarly prepared, and made me late for a few of the afternoons, not that I minded. Thank you to Helen and to all those who offered me one. It was so lovely to have a break from Oxford, by the sea. (*Alasdair Leeding, Bridge Street*)



I offered prints of my painting 'Sunflowers for Ukraine', which I was selling to raise money for the work of International Rescue Committee in Ukraine. A huge thank you to everyone who supported this. Besides two original paintings, I have sold around 100 prints, not only to Osney people, but around the world. I still have some prints available if you'd like one for a donation of £20. Email me for details of how to pay. Include your address if you'd like me to post one (or more) or you can collect from Alan Goodwin in North Street. (*Elaine Kazimierczuk*)

A number of Ukrainian families who fled the war, leaving Ukraine via Moldova, Hungary, Slovenia and Italy, have been staying in my villa in France. They were helped by a Baptist priest in Erd, near Budapest, who has turned the community hall, his church and even his own apartment into overnight accommodation for refugees en route to northern Europe. All the children's clothes that were kindly donated by islanders back in March were taken to France and given to Kira (14 years old), Valerii (13), Ruslana (9), Emillia (9), Karolina (7), Nestor (7), Andrii (7), Olena (6), Kipriana (3) and David (2), helping five families. Anything left over was passed on to other families via a little local school. (*SJB*)

To join the Osney email list, contact:
osiramanager@gmail.com



Working life

Two islanders fill us in on what they do for a living. To contribute to this regular slot please contact Jane Buekett (see last page).

Jim Powell, West Street, picture editor

Kendra and I moved onto the island in October with our two children, one of whom is at university and the other (Nancy) in the sixth form at Cherwell School. We met at the *Observer* newspaper, although Kendra has been a garden writer for the last 10 years on magazines and newspapers, while writing books — mainly on gardens, the natural world and art. She has a book out now (*Garden for the Senses*) which is a paean to the country life in Leicestershire that we left behind but don't actually miss.

I am the *Observer's* Picture Editor. The job involves looking at more than 20,000 images that are sent each day by news photo agencies and freelance photographers, and also commissioning and editing work produced by *Observer* and *Guardian* photographers. At times such as these, I edit incredibly moving and poignant images from courageous photojournalists, currently working all over Ukraine.

On Fridays I also produce an online gallery called 'Twenty Photographs of the Week', which features the best photojournalism from around the world. It can be seen at theguardian.com

We love living on the island, and the wonderful dog walks in all directions, and we've met some really interesting people so far.

Arabella Byrne, West Street, freelance journalist

I am a journalist and writer for the *Telegraph*, *Mail*, *Spectator*, *Country Life* and *Tatler* among others. I write about all sorts of things but often get to write features about dogs, starring my pointer, Percy, who many of you have seen rocketing about the fields and meadows of West Oxford. I review films, television and books for the *Critic* magazine and very much enjoy getting to watch television in the daytime as part of my job. Writing is in my blood. My mother — who lived at West Street before we did — is a novelist, and my sister has published a

novel about the mystique surrounding Fabergé and the infamous eggs. I am in the process of co-writing a memoir with my mother in which we examine the mother/daughter relationship across several generations.

Osney has proved an inspiring and delightful place to work, as the output of creative energy to emerge from the island proves.

Immigration advice for Ukrainian nationals

Jenny Harvey, South Street

As some of you know, I am an immigration solicitor and I am of course quite involved in helping those fleeing Ukraine/applying for visas to come to the UK.

I am happy to give pro bono advice to potential sponsors who live on the island and to assist with the visa applications of those hoping to join us. (Assuming I can communicate with them by Zoom etc.)

Please email me: info@jennyharveyimmigration.co.uk

Simon Stubbings

We are sad to report that Simon Stubbings of East Street died on 31 March aged 77. He and his wife Joan moved to Osney in the mid 1990s and he was involved in island life in many ways. He was founder and chair of the Osney Island Boat Club and just last year rowed from here to London as part of the Osney Odyssey that he and Jude Carroll organised. Simon coordinated the publication of the excellent booklet *An Island in Oxford: A Portrait of Osney at the Millennium* (a scan is available on the



Osney website, under History) and was a great maker and sharer of homemade bread and marmalade. A master of humorous banter and repartee, he was much loved and will be greatly missed. We offer our condolences to Joan and his family.

Osney Supercharge update

Simon Collings, South Street

More than 30 houses and businesses on the island have now signed up to Osney Supercharge. This is a project installing solar panels and batteries to generate and store electricity locally, creating more capacity on the local grid. It is part of Project LEO (tinyurl.com/4z446f9u). The first roof installation has already been carried out in West Street.

Note that the Article 4 directive in Osney does allow for solar PV panels on street-facing roofs, although other installations such as Velux windows are prohibited.

Osney Lock Hydro

Saskya Huggins, director

It's been a record-breaking year for generation at Osney Lock Hydro. An incredible 244,117 kWh of clean green

electricity has been produced by harnessing the flow and fall of the river by the weir. That's enough energy to power more than 80 homes. Hydro generation will be slowing down as we enter the summer period, but the roof-mounted solar PV will still be in action.

Over the next few months we'll be regularly opening the site to visitors, so if you see the gate open please come in and have a look around. As well as seeing the hydro up close, try out the newly installed mosaic human sundial featuring local flora and fauna nominated by local residents. It's set to British Summer Time.

We're also planning more guided visit sessions. Check the website for details: www.osneylockhydro.org.uk

Flood scheme update

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme has reached a key milestone with its submission to the County Council for planning permission. Osney is one of a number of Oxford communities at increasing risk of flooding as climate change takes hold, and the city needs a long-term effective solution to avoid flooding of houses, businesses and infrastructure.

The plans are available on the County Council website and the consultation runs until 9 May.

Not with a bang...

Veronica Strang, East Street

On 20 March a magnet fishing club pulled five wartime hand grenades out of the river. The biggest of these, a Mills grenade, must have been narrowly missed by the piling used to build the coffer dam. The fishers called the police, who sealed off the area, and the grenades were taken away by the Ministry of Defence bomb squad.

Children sometimes fish here too. If you see anyone pull something grenade-shaped out of the river, the advice is to put it in a bucket of water to maintain the conditions in which it was found, and call 999.

The fishers also found a 'muff pistol' (see photo). In the eighteenth century women (and men) carried these dinky little flintlock pistols, often concealed in their hand-warming muffs, for self defence. This one needs some cleaning up.



Who was martyred 800 years ago?

Mark Davies, local historian

A plaque on the ruins of Osney Abbey commemorates the martyrdom, on 17 April 1222, of Haggai, alias Robert of Reading. Or does it?

The sign, put up in 1931 by Oxford City Council, confuses two different people. Robert of Reading did convert and take the name Haggai, but that was in the 1270s. The name of the convert who died in 1222 is unknown. His story is told in *The Collected Papers of Frederic Maitland* (1911): he was a young Christian deacon studying Hebrew at Oxford University when he decided to convert, was circumcised and married a Jewish woman. When questioned by the Church authorities, he replied: 'I renounce the new-fangled Law and the comments of Jesus, the false prophet.' That was not what they wanted to hear, and he was burnt alive for heresy.

As for Robert, he was a Dominican friar, who also married a Jewish woman after converting, but appears to have suffered no fatal consequences.

Park End Street in better days

David Walker, South Street

Today many of the buildings in Park End Street stand empty and awaiting redevelopment. But what was it like in its more vibrant days? David Walker continues his rediscovery of its past.

What is now the Department of Sociology opposite the Register Office was once Layton's motorcycle dealers. On the other side of Castle Mill Stream Coxeter's garage sold and repaired Daimler, Jaguar and Rover cars, with petrol pumps on the forecourt. Archer Cowley, the furniture removers, stretched to Park End Lane, on the corner of which was Hayter's horse-shoeing forge. In the late 1940s this became Temple's motor-cycle dealers. The offices of Hall's Oxford Brewery stood on the corner of Hollybush Row.

In what is now Frideswide Square, Walklett's chemist shop stood next to Weeks bread and cake shop (now Dosa Park). There was a Post Office, the Castle Hotel, Rogers bespoke bicycle workshop (now Finders Keepers), and J. White & Sons fruit and vegetable shop. Domino's Pizza at the corner of Beckett Street was once the Cosy Corner Café. The only business that still has the same use is the newsagent.

Gunpowder, typhoid and Morris cars

Did you know that during the English Civil War Osney Mill was used to make gunpowder? In 1642, when Charles I moved his court to Oxford, the Royal Mint was set up in New Inn Hall Street, melting down the university silverware into coins, and there was a sword factory in Wolvercote.

These and other stories of the city are told at the newly reopened Museum of Oxford. Its two galleries, inside the Town Hall, are packed with things to see and do. You can solve a typhoid mystery, dress up in nineteenth-century clothes and be a shopkeeper in Capes department store, furnish a house according to changing fashions through time, or place an object on the magic table and hear a story about it. My favourite is the maps showing the growth of the city from 910 to the present day.

Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Saturday. There's a shop and a café too.

Oxford Artweeks on North Street

Elizabeth Newbery at 3 North Street is showing work for Oxford Artweeks, 7–15 May 2022. Opening from 11 a.m.



to 6 p.m. daily. She is showing contemporary slipware ceramics, all hand-built (not thrown on a wheel) and decorated with coloured slips (liquid clay) and glazes. Prices from £25 to £250.

Chatty Wednesdays are back

Eli Harriss, Bridge Street

Every third Wednesday of the month (18 May, 15 June, 20 July etc.), 6.30–8 p.m. in The Holly Bush garden. Wrap up warm and come and meet other islanders. All welcome. I'll be wearing a red fedora.

Open Gardens and Tea on the Towpath

Susan Hutchinson, West Street

Saturday 11 June, gardens open 2.30–4 p.m.

You don't need a perfect garden to join in Open Gardens. This is a friendly event, a chance to meet neighbours you may never have spoken to, and enjoy the variety of gardens on the island. There will also be Tea on the Towpath, I hope with live music.

If you're thinking of opening your garden, are happy to help serve the tea, or want to borrow (or lend) a window box, contact me: osney.open.gardens@gmail.com, or 01865 428323.



Alice's Day

Saturday 2 July

This year St Frideswide's Church will be part of Oxford's annual celebration of the July day in 1862 on which the story of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* was first told, on a boat trip that passed right by Osney. The church will be hosting talks (arranged by the Lewis Carroll Society) about St Frideswide and the church's Liddell Door.

The great-granddaughter of the real Alice will also be speaking. There will be children's activities, guided walks and a book sale, plus more activities and a walk at Binsey Church on 3 July.

If you can help, please contact Mark Davies: mark.oxhist@gmail.com. For updates on Alice's Day Google 'Story Museum Alice'.

Osney Island Boat Club

Fiona Ravenscroft, South Street

Are you interested in getting out on the river? The Osney Island Boat Club owns three kayaks and a Canadian canoe for use by members. They are kept on the island with easy access to the river. Yearly membership runs from April to April and costs £50 per year per household plus a £30 joining fee. Membership is open to any person/household/family on the island. Please contact Fiona at osneyislandbc@gmail.com for further details and a look at the boats.

Vishuddha Yoga Centre

Good news for yoga enthusiasts and anyone who's been longing to see inside. The new yoga centre on East Street is opening at the start of June, with an open day on Saturday 4 June. Info and bookings at: www.vishuddhayoga.org

West Oxford Academy

Susan Hutchinson, West Street

West Oxford Academy is back! The term starts on Tuesday 24 May, 8.15 p.m., West Oxford Community Centre.

Each session consists of a 20–30 minute talk by a local resident, followed by questions and discussion over a glass of wine.

The first two talks are:

Mark Davies: Medley Manor Farm: the bizarre coincidence of my Irish/Indian family's eighteenth-century ownership

Enrique Zapata: A history of Argentinian tango

A flyer with the complete programme will be delivered in the week before the term starts. For more information please contact: westoxfordacademy@gmail.com.

Wildlife of Osney celebration

3 September 2022



A new community get-together, organised by Eleanor Dickey of Bridge Street. This will be a half-day outdoor event, with competitions and activities for all, focusing our awareness on local wildlife, from herons to hedgehogs to

hawthorn trees. If you'd like to help out, please contact Eleanor: e.dickey@reading.ac.uk

St Frideswide's Church

Rev. Rachel Cross

New life is bursting out all around us and care for the whole of creation is a top priority, for the Diocese of Oxford, and for us here at St Frideswide's. The Bible says 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it' (Psalm 24, v 1). As followers of Jesus, we are commanded to help look after whatever is important to God: people, communities and all of creation. Admittedly the Church hasn't always got this right, but a couple of weeks ago St Frideswide's and the diocese cooperated to complete an energy audit of the building. This information will help us to quantify and reduce our carbon footprint. We're looking forward to receiving the report and acting on the recommendations. And we'd be happy to share our lessons learned, and the advice received.

We are now into the summer schedule of services.

Every Sunday:

Parish Eucharist at St Frideswide's, 10.30 a.m.

Evensong at St Margaret's, Binsey, 4.30 p.m.

Holy Communion:

Last Sunday of the month: Book of Common Prayer, St Margaret's, Binsey, 9.00 a.m.

All other Sundays: BCP, St Frideswide's, 8.30 a.m.

Directory of local suppliers

The list will appear in the August newsletter and is online at: osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers
Please contact Jane Buekett to submit additions or changes.

OIRA info

Annual meeting

This took place on 25 April, for the first time since 2019, with three excellent speakers. Minutes and accounts on the website: osneyisland.org.uk/oira-documents/

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

OIRA committee

Alison Burdett alison.burdett@gmail.com (email list),
Alistair Butchers alistairbutchers@gmail.com, Maureen Ergeneli 07816 580990, Alan Goodwin (chair) 07765 034918 alan@alangoodwin.co.uk, Eli Harriss gekh2@yahoo.co.uk,
Jennifer/Nick Meakin (secretary) jennifermeakin@gmail.com,
Karen Schoenemann 07718 632742, Julia Turner (treasurer) 07971 881258.

Newsletter and website editor: Jane Buekett (janebuekett@yahoo.co.uk, 01865 251454). Newsletter distribution: Anna Truelove. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome. Please contact Jane. Next deadline 25 July.



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

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OIRA newsletter supplement -- May 2022

Temporary water pipe on Osney Bridge

Various inspections and meetings have been taking place about how to replace the temporary water pipe on Osney Bridge. My contact at Thames Water said on 27/4/22 "we expect to receive final confirmation of an agreement to modify from the councils imminently". It is now more than a year since TWU was first notified of a leak in the pipe under the bridge. The repair is taking far too long, and I shall be putting in a formal complaint, especially because the bridge is now so dangerous for cyclists.

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

The planning application is in at last, much to the relief of all those whose homes have flooded in the past. It will be decided by the County Council, so please send any comments for or against the application to planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk, ref – MW.0027/22. The deadline for comments is 9 May. There are full details on the County website.

Cleaner rivers?

Wolvercote Mill Stream, north of Port Meadow, has just become the second stretch of river in the UK to achieve Designated Bathing Water Status. This is an important step towards providing a clean wild swimming spot in Oxford, and work will now take place with partners to monitor the water quality and investigate ways in which to address pollution. The EA now has a duty to test the water regularly from May to September and the City Council must display a sign telling us what the water quality is. We hope this will put more pressure on Thames Water to stop dumping raw sewage into our rivers.

Proposed new footbridge over the Thames

There is still no date for the planning application for the new footbridge from Oxpens to Osney Mead, because the City Council wants to carry out some extra public consultation in early summer before it is published for formal consultation. I have been passing on people's concerns, and the officers are, for instance, seeking ways of reducing the speed of cyclists, where they share space with pedestrians.

Roads maintenance

I regularly complain about the state of the roads on the Island, especially East Street, Swan Street and the top of Bridge Street. At last they have told me that "[We have highlighted areas around the island for works this financial year](#)" and promised to look at these three streets. There are no further details yet.

And finally.....

If you have an old bicycle in the bike racks and you want to keep it, please check to make sure it has not been tagged for removal.

The East Street willows are due to be pollarded next year. This is good for their health.

I'd like to organise a group to pull up Himalayan balsam from along some of our water courses. The City Council will take away whatever we pull up. (The ecology and biodiversity officer who spoke at the OIRA AGM on 25 May confirmed that it presents a threat to biodiversity in our area.) If you might like to join us, please get in touch.

There is a community bus that provides a door-to-door service for older people. If you would like to know more, please contact me. There is already one satisfied regular customer on Osney Island.