

# Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

## January floods

Simon Collings, Oxford Flood Alliance

The recent floods peaked on 18 January, when the Thames south of Osney Lock reached 3.58 m. This was lower than the 2021 event, during which it peaked at 3.73 m. The floods of winter 2021 were the most serious since January/February 2014, when the Thames reached 3.93 m and some Osney properties came very close to flooding.

The City Council and Environment Agency showed good preparedness and response in the recent flooding, including sandbag defences at Bulstake Close. Demountable barriers are available for Osney should they be needed.



## Some goodbyes

David Walker

It has been sad to say goodbye to David Walker, one of Osney's longest-standing residents. After more than 80 years on the island David has moved to a rather luxurious care complex in Witney.

David moved to Osney with his parents when he was 12 years old. His family owned a garage and four-bedroomed house at 41 West Street — the site of what is now West Court. Here David grew up and married Mary, who lived with her parents at 55 West Street. The couple spent their whole married life living in their South Street home. Mary sadly died in 2018, aged 91, and their daughter Marilyn has been helping David at home.

We will miss David as a great source of local historical knowledge, a regular at the Waterman's and then the Democrats', and a cheerful friendly presence on the island.

Veronika Lukács

We moved to Abingdon this January after living on Osney Island for 8.5 years. I remember falling in love with a house on East Street in 2014, and we moved in soon after, with me nearly 9 months pregnant with our younger son. I have many fond memories of island life: being the OIRA secretary, helping organise Tea on the Towpath, the wonderful river walks, and fantastic neighbours on both East and South Streets, where we subsequently moved. We felt it was time to move on, but we will always look on our life on the island as something very special. Many thanks to those who helped us with the move.

## The Old Power Station

Pauline Massey, Bridge Street

Seeing the Old Power Station reduced to a shell, I am reminded of its unsettling presence in my childhood. What was this black, ominous shape looming over our garden? And why did it sometimes emit groaning noises? The creaking and cranking was actually the sound of huge

shovels being lowered to lift up coal from barges on the river below.

A regular cry from my mother and neighbouring gardens was, 'Look at my white sheets!' Washing drying on the line was frequently covered in black smuts, presumably belched from the chimney which I identified recently in an old photograph.

My aunt, like many islanders in those days, enjoyed swimming, and the power station outlet provided warm river water in an unofficial bathing spot. One day my aunt got into difficulties but was rescued by another islander who was a strong swimmer and, later in life, our local window cleaner.

## Working life

David Hunt, West Street

I recently moved to Osney and am in Oxford part time. The rest of the time I spend in London where I am a partner in a famously absurd US law firm. I specialise in international commercial and treaty arbitration, so spend a great deal of my time arguing about things that have gone wrong for people, an activity I find surprisingly rewarding. Moving to Oxford was intended to provide a base for writing submissions and doing focused work. In practice, most of my time at present is spent on some very ineffective DIY, and digging flower beds. I am very much looking forward to being part of this exciting community — do say hello if you are passing by.

Portia Roelofs, Bridge Street

Nigeria has a bad reputation when it comes to governance. However, over the course of my six months' PhD fieldwork in Ibadan in the country's southwest, I became convinced that there was much to learn from Nigerian voters and politicians. In particular, there seemed to be ways of doing politics which were at odds with the dominant theoretical approaches in Western political science, yet appealed to common-sense principles of how to hold those in power to account.

In my forthcoming book I set out these lessons for good governance that is 'socially-embedded'. These include:

- that transparency should apply as much to social relationships as to budgets and documents
- that leaders should be 'accessible' to their constituents
- that the unpredictability of face-to-face interactions makes them a powerful form of accountability.

*Good Governance in Nigeria: Rethinking Accountability and Transparency in the Twenty-First Century* will be published by Cambridge University Press this spring. See: [tiny.cc/0ouuz](http://tiny.cc/0ouuz)

## Osney Supercharge update

Simon Collings, South Street

The Osney Supercharge project officially comes to an end in February. Low Carbon Hub plans to continue with the initiative even if they do not get government funding for a second phase. We now have 16 households and businesses on the island pooling data on how much power they are generating, and how much they are using through the day. Power comes from solar panels on their roofs and from the hydro. Several other properties on the island already had solar panels and we hope to integrate these into the data gathering. We can compare all these data to overall demand on the island and analyse the figures street by street. This is helping us and SSEN develop ideas about future grid design as part of achieving net zero.

As part of the project we asked for a charging point for an electric club-car vehicle. By the time you read this it should be in place, beside the existing club-car bay in East Street. It means Co-Wheels can allocate an eV to the island in place of the existing hybrid.

### A new opportunity

Osney residents are invited to take part in grid-balancing trials using a free app called equiwatt. All you have to do is download the app and reduce electricity use for an hour when asked to. In return you get rewards, and help reduce demand at times when the grid is most carbon-intensive. Please help if you can. Find out more at: [www.equivatt.com/project-leo](http://www.equivatt.com/project-leo)

## Osney lock keeper

The Osney lock keeper, Mark, left last May. Since then the role has been covered by experienced EA staff and we have had no resident lock keeper. It seems that a new person has now been appointed and will start some time in the spring. Rumour has it her name is Shirley and she was formerly a school teacher.

## West Oxford Academy

Susan Hutchinson, West Street

We will be back on Tuesday 14 March, 8.15 p.m., at West Oxford Community Centre. The format is a short talk by a local resident followed by discussion over a glass of wine. All welcome. Topics include:

- The archaeology of the Uffington White Horse
- The controversy surrounding Spain's Law of Historical Memory

■ The English essay: from Hazlitt to Dickens

■ Lewis Carroll's adventures in Russia

The programme is not quite complete, so if you would like to give a talk, please contact me: [westoxfordacademy@gmail.com](mailto:westoxfordacademy@gmail.com) A flyer with more info will come round nearer the time.

## OIRA Annual Meeting

The OIRA Annual Meeting will be on Wednesday 19 April, 7.30 p.m., in the Mary Town Room at the West Oxford Community Centre. All islanders welcome. Doors open at 7. Refreshments provided. Speakers to be announced.

## Ceramics exhibits

Elizabeth Newbery, North Street

### Oxford Artweeks, 20–29 May

Osney Island will be represented by three ceramicists in this year's Artweeks. Simon Pressey and Joss Alexander, who both work from Simon's studio in West Street, will be showing with me at 3 North Street.

### Radley College, 14 April–14 May

I'm lucky enough to be showing my work with Dylan Bowen at the Sewell Centre Gallery at Radley College. Dylan is a 'name' and his work is widely collected. This is my first big exhibition.

I'll circulate more details of both shows nearer the time.



▲ Ceramic by  
Elizabeth Newbery

## Open Gardens and Tea on the Towpath

Susan Hutchinson, West Street

Summer feels a long way off, but Open Gardens and Tea on the Towpath will happen in late May or early June. If there are dates which clash with other events or half term, please let me know.

If you would consider opening your garden, please email me: [osney.open.gardens@gmail.com](mailto:osney.open.gardens@gmail.com) or phone: 01865 428323. Everyone is welcome to join in. Provisional offers are not binding, and gardens don't have to be manicured: the overall aim is variety.

I would also like to start planning Tea on the Towpath. If you can help please get in touch.

## Christmas events 2022

Matt Dyson writes: The annual carol singing around Osney took place on Sunday 4 December, with a splendidly large and loud group. We visited eight houses around the island, and a houseboat, before ending in the Hollybush. It's a really lovely tradition, for young and old alike, and I can't wait for next year.

Debbie Hall writes: A big thank you to all who took part in the Osney Advent calendar. Once again I was amazed by the variety of ideas and the beautiful things people displayed. The diversity was particularly noticeable and a range of age groups and different cultures were represented. I really enjoyed seeing all the windows.

## Allotments news

Verity Wilson, Field Secretary, Twenty Pound Meadow

Very few plots have escaped flooding this winter. Autumn-sown garlic and broad beans will be lost, but tough perennial plants may survive. I can see kale and even bushy rosemary rising above the icy depths. It will all take a while to dry but, take heart, the allotments have been through this before and survived.

When you come to clear up, please stack any wet rubbish neatly on your own plots and we will try to make arrangements for disposal.

## Osney Island Boat Club

Fiona Ravenscroft, South Street

Before long it will be spring, and time to get out and enjoy the river. Osney Island Boat Club aims to give everyone the opportunity to take to the water. Members have access to two kayaks, a Canadian canoe and a new sit-on kayak for kids and small adults kindly donated by islanders. Whole families or individuals can give it a try, from beginners to more experienced boaters.

Membership is open to all islanders and other local households and costs just £50 per year per household with a one-off £30 joining fee. To find out more contact me: [osneyislandbc@gmail.com](mailto:osneyislandbc@gmail.com)

## St Frideswide's Church

Rev. Rachel Cross

### *Free community meals*

St Frideswide's is excited to be working in partnership with West Oxford Food Larder, Community Kitchen and Oxford Food Hub. From Friday 3 February, 4–6 p.m., we will be serving a free weekly community meal using surplus food that would otherwise go to waste. Everyone is welcome to eat in or take away.

If you would like to help, contact me to find out more: [revrachel.osneybenefice@outlook.com](mailto:revrachel.osneybenefice@outlook.com)

### *Introduction to Christianity*

On alternate Fridays, starting 10 February, Simon Cross will host a series of six evenings exploring the foundational beliefs of Christianity. Each session will begin with a light bite at 7 p.m. followed by discussion from 7.30 to 8.30 p.m.

It will be a safe place to learn, and express differences of opinion.

To find out more or register your interest contact: [simon.cross757@gmail.com](mailto:simon.cross757@gmail.com)

## Vishuddha Yoga Centre update

James Pritchard

The Yoga Centre on East Street opened its door eight months ago and has welcomed many Osney residents for a wide variety of classes and workshops. We have also had strong interest from Oxford architects, including a large group of Brookes' students who came to look around and study the building. It was a squeeze, but pleasing to have an avalanche of insightful questions from these young professionals.

Oxford Open Doors was another success, with more than 100 visitors, to nose around or sample the free classes on offer. Soon after, the Centre received a Green Award from Oxford Preservation Trust 'recognising the contribution to Oxford'.

The Centre was built on the site of sculptor Hugo Powell's studio and his family kindly offered his final work *Dancing Phoenix*, which has been re-cast in bronze and looks magnificent in the garden.

The Centre aims to build a community bridging the separate disciplines and lineages of yoga. We are already seeing the young shoots of community, particularly at weekend workshops and a free class for Ukrainian refugees held every Sunday.



▲ *Dancing Phoenix in the January frost*

## Directory of local suppliers

This list is compiled from islanders' recommendations only. The list is online at: [osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers](http://osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers) Local shops and services are listed at: [osneyisland.org.uk/local-shops-and-services](http://osneyisland.org.uk/local-shops-and-services)

Please contact Jane Buekett to submit additions or changes.

### *Baby kit*

Baby kit for hire: 01235 280081, [www.babycomes2.co.uk](http://www.babycomes2.co.uk)

### *Bicycles, repairs and accessories*

Jon Wyver: 07842901873, [info@oxbicycles.co.uk](mailto:info@oxbicycles.co.uk), [www.facebook.com/oxbicycles](http://www.facebook.com/oxbicycles) (will deliver and pick up in Oxford free of charge).

### *Building and roof repairs*

Julian Brand, JB Leadwork and Roofing: 07747 601444, [jbleadwork@hotmail.com](mailto:jbleadwork@hotmail.com)

Rob Cassettari, North Hinksey Builders: 01865 242312/07977 152884/07900 881511, [robnhc@virginmedia.com](mailto:robnhc@virginmedia.com)

Everest Roofing Ltd: 01865 8816856, [enquiries@everestroofing.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:info@prroofingoxford.co.uk), [www.prroofingoxford.co.uk](http://www.prroofingoxford.co.uk)

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

Tim Mera, KM Builders Oxford: 01865 608 649, 07462 971475, [kmbuildingservices@yahoo.com](mailto:kmbuildingservices@yahoo.com), [kmbuildersoxford.co.uk](http://kmbuildersoxford.co.uk)

Oxford Roofing and Maintenance:  
01865 820323, 07468 429000,  
[oxfordroofingandmaintenance.co.uk](http://oxfordroofingandmaintenance.co.uk)  
Richard S. Pocock: 07766 026648 (general  
builder)  
Mike Shepheard, MJ Construction  
(Abingdon): 07834 321274,  
[mjconstruction@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mjconstruction@hotmail.co.uk) (larger  
jobs)

#### **Carpenters and flooring**

Steve, Amazon Flooring: 07899 918015  
Jonathan Everett, Lockwood Carpentry:  
07597 952381, [j.everett.lwc@gmail.com](mailto:j.everett.lwc@gmail.com)  
Bill Spires: 07786 672492 (carpenter  
willing to take on smaller fiddly jobs)

#### **Cat sitting/feeding and dog walking**

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

#### **Chimney sweep**

Martin Simmonds: 07762 816185,  
[enquiry@ashlogs.com](mailto:enquiry@ashlogs.com), [www.ashlogs.com](http://www.ashlogs.com)

#### **Cleaners**

C&S Cleaning Services: 01865 872395,  
07824 159855  
Edna: 07548 384737

#### **Computers**

Bill Baxter, The Animated Laser Company:  
07774 412944 (noon to midnight, Old  
Marston), [bill@animatedlaser.co.uk](mailto:bill@animatedlaser.co.uk)  
Bill Richardson: 01865 376100,  
[bill@macfaction.co.uk](mailto:bill@macfaction.co.uk) (Macs)  
Mac Simple: 01865 580886/07974  
321064, [www.macsimple.co.uk](http://www.macsimple.co.uk)

#### **Damp**

Damprot Renovations Ltd: 01865 742144  
Stonehouses:  
[stonehousewaterproofing.co.uk](http://stonehousewaterproofing.co.uk)

#### **Drains**

Matthew Andrews, Drain Technology:  
07557 272393, 01865 587086,  
[enquiries@draintechology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@draintechology.co.uk),  
[www.draintechology.co.uk](http://www.draintechology.co.uk) (lives on the  
island)

#### **Electricians**

Baldwin Appliances: 01865 377484,  
[www.baldwinappliances.com](http://www.baldwinappliances.com)  
Jamie Cooke: 07775 700300,  
[JC.Electrical@hotmail.com](mailto:JC.Electrical@hotmail.com)  
DEC Electricians: 01865  
725453, [mail@decoxford.co.uk](mailto:mail@decoxford.co.uk),  
[www.dec-oxfordltd.co.uk](http://www.dec-oxfordltd.co.uk)  
RJB Electrical: 01865 882723/07711  
934348 (rewires and new installations)  
Mark Morris (Botley): 07970 342375 (also  
plumber)  
Andy Webb (A W Electrical Services,  
Yarnton): 01865 377171, 07931 127982

#### **Footcare in your home**

Kate Reid: 07952 127534

#### **Garden compost and manure**

George: 01793 575100/07831  
437989, [info@muckandmulch.co.uk](mailto:info@muckandmulch.co.uk),  
[www.muckandmulch.co.uk](http://www.muckandmulch.co.uk)

#### **Gardening services**

David Morris: 01865 725875 (gardening  
maintenance and some diy)  
Jason: [info@oxfordgardenservices.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordgardenservices.co.uk)  
(tree surgery)  
Rory Whelehan: 07341 849035,  
[rory@rorylyn.co.uk](mailto:rory@rorylyn.co.uk) (gardener, lawn/hedge  
cutting, general tidying)  
Clive: 07787 741968  
Heather: 07522 856744 (one-off or  
regular jobs, heavy or light work including  
pruning)

#### **Green builders and installers**

Energy My Way: 0845 371 3181,  
[www.energymyway.co.uk](http://www.energymyway.co.uk)  
JoJu Solar: 0800 0542 977,  
[www.jojusolar.co.uk](http://www.jojusolar.co.uk)  
Next Generation Renewable Energy Ltd:  
01993 810130, [office@ngre.co.uk](mailto:office@ngre.co.uk)

#### **Gutter clearing**

Ben's Gutters: 0800 9173157/07778  
240161, [info@bensgutters.com](mailto:info@bensgutters.com),  
[www.bensgutters.com](http://www.bensgutters.com)  
Greg Zasuwa: [clearviewforyou@gmail.com](mailto:clearviewforyou@gmail.com)  
(also window cleaning)

#### **Handymen**

Colin Stanley, Small Odd Jobs: 07804  
908545

#### **Home hairdressers**

Sally Horton: 07815 445229  
Nadine Wright: 07824660184

#### **Locksmith**

Davies Hardened Security: 01865  
371816/07711 625092

#### **Logs**

Logs for All: 0845 269 0306,  
[www.logsforall.co.uk](http://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](mailto:courtcandyshop@googlemail.com)

#### **Oven cleaning**

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

#### **Painters and decorators**

Rob Bennett: 0790 5819310  
Steve Brierty: 01491 836762/0785 0357414  
Dave Buckle: 01865 848630  
Paul Buckle: 07920 099196  
John Chappell: 07985 490970  
Dan Driscoll: 07934 718788,  
[danieldriscoll63@gmail.com](mailto:danieldriscoll63@gmail.com) (also home  
repairs)  
Sam Gordon: 07976 516941 (plasterer)  
Brendan McCarthy: 07982 614633  
Andrew Turner: 07591 491804 (repaints  
masonry, front doors and windows)

#### **Pests**

Avenge: 02865 246195/07879 405060  
(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](http://www.avidheating.co.uk)  
Jules Jones: 01993 778244/07790 961395,  
[reallygoodplumbing@outlook.com](mailto:reallygoodplumbing@outlook.com)  
Ivan Kilbee: 01235 847527 /07771 787585  
Mark Morris, Botley: 07970 342375 (also  
electricity)  
Remloc Plumbing and Heating: 01235  
536345 (Abingdon)

#### **Removals**

A. G. Jacob and Sons: 07977 963929,  
[www.agjacobandson.co.uk](http://www.agjacobandson.co.uk)  
House and Carriage: 01608 811444/07769  
585988

#### **Sewing services**

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

#### **TV aerials, wi-fi and satellite dishes**

Oxford Aerials: 01865 400141,  
[https://oxfordaerials.co.uk/](http://oxfordaerials.co.uk/) (installers and  
repairers)

#### **Window cleaning**

Mark Jennings: 01865 848904/07773  
159198  
James Middlebrook, Transparent  
Window Cleaning: 07957 410771,  
[messageTWC@gmail.com](mailto:messageTWC@gmail.com)  
Torridon Slaney: 07746 356307

#### **Windows**

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

### **OIRA info**

#### **Bridge Street noticeboard**

To display something on the noticeboard  
(no larger than A5) contact Julia Marsh  
[julia.marsh@btconnect.com](mailto: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](mailto:osiramanager@gmail.com)

#### **OIRA committee**

Andrew Boag [andrew@boag.org.uk](mailto:andrew@boag.org.uk),  
Alison Burdett [alison.burdett@gmail.com](mailto:alison.burdett@gmail.com)  
(email list), Alistair Butchers  
[alistairbutchers@gmail.com](mailto:alistairbutchers@gmail.com), Claire Dalton  
(secretary) [claire.dalton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:claire.dalton@hotmail.co.uk),  
Maureen Ergeneli 07816 580990,  
Alan Goodwin (chair) 07765 034918  
[alan@alangoodwin.co.uk](mailto:alan@alangoodwin.co.uk), Eli Harriss  
[gekh2@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gekh2@yahoo.co.uk), Karen Schoenemann  
07718 632742, Julia Turner (treasurer)  
07971 881258.

Newsletter and website editor: Jane  
Buekett ([janebuekett@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janebuekett@yahoo.co.uk), 01865  
251454/07716 408085). Newsletter  
distribution: Anna Truelove.

February, 2023

## **OIRA newsletter supplement**

### Network Rail (NR) work

We are waiting to hear whether the Department for Transport (DfT) will give the go-ahead to NR's new plans. Until then, NR refuses to allow any information to be released. I can, however, say that the extra time has given them the chance to sort out some of the problems that closure of the railway bridge would cause, including improved access to medical care.

### Thames Water (TW) work on Osney Bridge

TW is now repairing and strengthening the northern footway on Osney Bridge, prior to replacing the damaged waterpipe. For a long time the Environment Agency (EA) insisted that no work could be done from pontoons or floating apparatus between 1 April and 31 October, because the full width of the river must be kept open at all times for navigation. After top-level negotiations between TW, the councils, the DfT, NR and the EA, the latter seems *at last* to have conceded that they will be able to provide occasional extra "intermittent closure windows", if necessary.

TW is keen to take advantage of the times when the railway bridge will be closed and avoid disrupting road traffic with lane closures at other times.

### Oxpens Regeneration

The outline planning application has finally gone in. They are now proposing more housing – 234 new flats (50% would be affordable) – 258 student rooms (the council says this would free up family homes), labs for R+D, office space and a hotel. It will be largely car-free. Oxpens Meadow would be expanded and there would be new green public spaces within the site.

If you have internet access, please look at [www.oxpensoxford.uk](http://www.oxpensoxford.uk) where there are lots of pictures of what it might look like, as well as information. If not, please go to the City Council general information sessions in the Westgate Library on Mon, Wed and Fri from 10am to 3pm.

We have until 15 February to comment.

### Teabooks

Also in the Westgate Library a new book group is starting up. It will meet on the first Tuesday of each month at 10am, with all the books supplied by the library. Come and join us at 10am on Tues 7 February.

### Welcome new cycle parking in East Street

The City Council has apologised for putting in new cycle hoops on the grass in East Street without consultation or even warning. If we feel that the area is getting muddy, they can come and put down some gravel.

Best wishes

*Susanna*