

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

Sounds of my Osney childhood

Pauline Massey, Bridge Street

With no double glazing and frost on the inside of bedroom windows, my childhood slumbers were accompanied by the comforting chugging of steam engines and their sometimes shrill whistling. There was competition from the calling of owls. Sitting on a garden bench at dusk so many bats flitted close that I feared their constant swooping.

During the day there was clanking from the old power station as it hauled up coal and belched out filthy smuts from its chimney. But there were more human sounds too. Laughter and squealing as we raced up and down the street in our home-made go-carts, or the clip-clop of horse's hooves as the 'recycling' man brought along his cart, calling out 'Rag 'n bone' and 'Any old iron'. On Sunday mornings trumpets, trombones and robust hymn singing roused us. The Salvation Army had come to save our souls.

Most of all, I remember the beat of swans' wings as the background to my childhood. There were so many swans on the island then, and a few brazen ones would knock on East Street doors with their beaks, requesting stale bread.

Advent calendar 2023

Debbie Hall, East Street



It's nearly Osney Advent calendar time again. Each December we have a living Advent calendar. On every day of Advent a picture or display with a Christmas,

Advent or winter theme is revealed in the window of a house on the island. Last year we had stars, ceramics, poetry, gingerbread people, mathematics, penguins and some very different responses to the Christmas theme. A range of age groups and different cultures was represented. You can see some of last year's windows at osneyisland.org.uk/advent-calendar-2022

Anyone on the island is welcome to join. If you would like to take part in the 2023 Osney Advent calendar please contact me (debbietheduck@hotmail.com) by mid-November and I will assign everyone a date. We need at least 24 volunteers.

Carol singing

Matt Dyson, Bridge Street

Sunday 10 December, 5 p.m., meet outside The Punter
Osney carol-singing is a family-friendly event. We visit any house on the island that requests a knock and a carol. Requests are often (but not necessarily) accompanied by the offer of some small refreshment. There are normally quite a few children among the singers, and each group of children should be accompanied by an adult. We try to be done in around an hour. We'll aim to finish in The Holly Bush for a final carol or two, as we did last year. No particular singing skill is required, and the words to the carols will be provided.

Please tell me (matthewdyson@yahoo.com):

- If you would like a doorstep carol. I need your name, address, and whether you would like a specific carol. We can't guarantee anything but will do our best and we love stopping by your house.
- If you want to sing. All are welcome, including people turning up on the day, but it would be helpful to know in advance, to make sure we have enough singers.

Art and crafts in Bridge Street

Bob and Louise Summers

Saturday and Sunday 4/5 and 11/12 November, 11 a.m.–5 p.m., 69 Bridge Street

A group of local artists/crafters will be having another exhibition, with items for sale, over two weekends in November. Rag rugs, paintings, sculpture, hand-made prints, rush basketry, cards and more.



WOCA Arts and Crafts Christmas Market

Saturday 2 December 11 a.m.–6 p.m.,

Sunday 3 December 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

The West Oxford Community Association Arts and Crafts Christmas Market will be in the Community Centre hall again this year.

A chance to buy gifts with a difference direct from more than 20 local artists and makers producing paintings, prints, jewellery, textiles, ceramics, woodworks, books, cards, calendars, decorations and much more.

Tumbling Bay Cafe, with its fabulous food and drink, will be open throughout.

For more information visit the Facebook page: tinyurl.com/bdhwm2a

West Oxford Light Festival

Sunday 19 November, 4.30–7.30 p.m., Botley Park

There will be illuminated trees, lanterns, entertainers and a barbecue. The lantern procession led by Sol Samba will leave from outside West Oxford Community Centre (WOCC) at 6.30 p.m.

In advance of the festival you can:

- Come to free workshops on 4 and 7 November making large lanterns for the procession.
- Make your own small lantern at home. Order a free kit to collect on 11 November.
- Make an illuminated crown to wear in the procession. Free drop-in workshop, 19 November, 2–4.30 p.m., WOCC.
- Get your face painted, 19 November, 2.30 p.m.

Booking essential for workshops, face painting and lantern kits: tinyurl.com/mp6h4txf

Remembering Markus Haacker

Many Osney residents will associate Markus with his vintage white VW Beetle. He lived on Osney with his wife Veronika and their children Otto and Iván, first in East Street and then South Street. The family moved to Abingdon at the start of this year. Markus died suddenly and unexpectedly from cardiac arrest on 25 August.

A generous, clever, authentic man with hugely eclectic interests, Markus believed in supporting local businesses, making his own bread, and hearing live music. In his work as a development and health economist Markus made a significant contribution to the understanding of the impact of HIV/AIDS and had just finished a groundbreaking policy paper on the global economic

impact of the war in Ukraine. He worked for Harvard, the World Bank, UNAIDS, the IMF, UCL, The Global Fund and the Center for Global Development.

Markus was born in Königstein im Taunus in 1970 and is buried in Berlin. Family and friends are supporting Veronika and the children.



New on Osney

Nomi Dave and Noel Lobley, West Street

We're delighted to join the Osney Island community and will be here on West Street until July 2024. We previously lived in Oxford for many years, including playing in the gamelan orchestra with our dear friend – and East Street resident – Jude Carroll. After about a decade in the US, we're back in Oxford while Noel and Nomi are on sabbatical, at the Pitt Rivers Museum and Centre for Socio-Legal Studies respectively. Zak (13) is in Year 9 at Matthew Arnold and Kieran (8) is in Year 4 at West Oxford. It's been lovely meeting many of the neighbours on West Street already and we're looking forward to getting to know other islanders soon.



Mateo and Tom, Bridge Street

We're Mateo and Tom, new additions to Bridge Street (the freshly-painted green house), having moved from London in mid-August.

Mateo works as a stage/screen actor and recording artist. Ever the juggler, he has just started a 2-year creative writing programme at the University of Oxford scribbling a first novel. In his spare time he likes to thwack tennis balls across a net and take long walks along the river to learn his lines (don't be alarmed if you see him babbling to himself).

Tom works as an environmental economist focused on measuring the environmental and social impact of organisations. He advises two NGOs, one focused on direct democracy, the other on the (re)creation of a Platonic Academy Centre. When he's not in the garden dreaming up a haven for local wildlife, Tom can be spotted zipping across town on his bike to the swimming pool.

We had a great time at the garden party this summer (which happened to coincide with Mateo's birthday) and have been touched by the warm welcome we have received so far.

Running the Oxford half-marathon

Grace Boag-Matthews, East Street

Sunday, 7:45 a.m., Dad and I, full of peanut butter and granola, set off for University Parks. The buzz of crowds distracted us from the freezing temperature and a guided

YELLOW SUBMARINE



group warm-up encouraged us towards the start pen. By 9:30, we were in position, almost the furthest back among the 13,000 other runners.

As the announcer sent us off, shoutout by shoutout, the volume of runners was incredible. I high-fived Dad and set off at what felt like an unsustainable pace, fueled by the shouts of the crowds. I didn't use my headphones once, it would have been a waste of the atmosphere.

The final 5 km were the hardest. Focused on the clapping, whooping and announcements of inspiring stories, I finally approached that big blue archway. The collective pride (and relief) as fellow runners embraced their families and collected their medals was overwhelming. After collecting our much-needed layers, Dad and I met the Yellow Submarine supporters, armed with cake, coffee and goody bags for their 70-strong team of runners.

To support our fundraising for Yellow Submarine, use these links:

Grace: tinyurl.com/2t7x3rfc

Andrew (Dad): tinyurl.com/4a78bjec

Lollipops

Mark Van Oss, East Street

This year is the 70th anniversary of the SCP. Not the Scottish Communist Party but the Lollipops (School Crossing Patrol services). For 70 years they have ensured, with a smile, the safety of children, their parents, elderly people and the occasional duck.

You may not have seen any Lollipop men and women for a while, and certainly none smoothing the disruption of the Botley Road closure. My investigations found

that 1,500 of these services were disappearing each year from the UK until there was a backlash of local petitions. Perhaps we will soon see more smiles among the river of pedestrians flowing in both directions past our island.

Crown copyright

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS) designed to protect Oxford from the growing risk of major flooding has been in development for the last 10 years. The detailed plans are currently awaiting approval by the County Council.

To build the scheme, the Environment Agency (EA) has to acquire land along its route using a compulsory purchase order. A small number of landowners have objected and this means there has to be a public inquiry, chaired by a planning inspector.

The inquiry is taking place from 14 November at The Kings Centre on Osney Mead. It will last around 5 weeks and members of the public can attend to listen to proceedings. For further information on the inquiry process and timetable visit the EA page: tinyurl.com/3ff8uc8p

The inspector will make her recommendation to the Secretary of State who makes the final decision. This is expected around the middle of next year.



▲ Botley Road in 2014

Osney Power Station

After months of demolition and piling work the new building is now taking shape. The steel frame is going up at the south end of the site, and will be extended to Arthur Street (behind the building, from our point of view) in November. Metal decking will be added to the steel frame and then concreted to form floors. A new stair core and lift shaft will be built in the southeast corner.



▲ View of OPS from the southeast

Existing brickwork, which you can see on the river side, is being repaired. Building of the new external wall will begin in December.

This should mean that the most dirty and noisy work is past, although utilities still need to be installed along Arthur Street.

Allotments news

Verity Wilson, Field Secretary, Twenty Pound Meadow

Despite building works, road closures and torrential rain, the allotments are looking beautiful at the harvest end of the year. Thank you plot holders for your patience in the face of all kinds of developments in West Oxford but, mostly, thank you for nurturing your pumpkins and sunflowers. It is a pleasure to walk around the site.

To help newcomers, we are starting a low-key mentoring scheme whereby long-term gardeners can advise people new to allotments. If you feel you can help, please let me know at verity.wilson@yahoo.com (not the WhatsApp group, please). Conversely, also contact me if you would like a mentor.

Plot holders will be pleased to know that the shop (open most Sundays 10 a.m.–12 noon) now stocks weed-suppressant membrane. The shop is a good place for news and tips, and there is coffee and cake as well.

St Frideswide's Church

Rev. Rachel Cross

Saturday 18 November, 5.15–6.15 p.m.

(doors open 5 p.m.)

In the first week of November London is hosting a global summit on the risks and rewards of artificial intelligence (AI). What is AI and is it really calling into question 'what it means to be human'?

You are invited to explore this question with Simon Cross at St Frideswide's Church.

Simon is the national AI Policy Lead for the Church of England. He researches technology ethics and advises bishops in the House of Lords on government regulation and the impacts of AI on society.

His presentation will be followed by a public discussion and questions from the floor. Wondering whether Christianity has anything helpful to say about AI? Come along and find out.

Seasonal recipe: Ukrainian borscht

Borscht is an east European staple, and there are a number of different versions. We were taught this one by the Ukrainian families who lived on Osney last year. It is delicious.

150 g stewing beef, chopped small
1 small red cabbage, shredded
1 onion, chopped small
3 carrots, peeled and chopped to matchsticks
3 beetroots, peeled and grated
2 large potatoes, peeled and diced
3 cloves garlic, crushed

2 dessert spoons tomato paste
1 dessert spoon horseradish sauce
3 bayleaves
2 dessert spoons wine vinegar
pinch of sugar
olive oil
chopped parsley and yoghurt/sour cream to serve

Put the beef and bayleaves plus a pint of water in a large pan and boil for 30 minutes. Add the red cabbage and simmer for another 30 minutes. Sauté the carrots and onion in olive oil and when soft add the beetroot for a few minutes. Transfer all this to the large pot, and add the potatoes, tomato paste and horseradish. Add water if needed to cover the veg. Cook for 20 minutes. Add the vinegar, sugar, garlic and seasoning as required and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in the parsley and serve with a spoonful of yoghurt or sour cream.

This makes enough for eight people. The flavour improves with keeping, so make it a day or two in advance if you can.

OIRA subscriptions reminder

Jula Turner, Bridge Street

Many thanks to everyone who has returned their OIRA subscription envelopes. It is much appreciated and helps support the ongoing costs for the newsletter and website. We have so far received £396.30 from 108 households.

If you haven't yet returned your subscription envelope, don't worry. They will be gratefully received at any time. If you've mislaid the envelope you can still contribute (minimum £3 salaried, £1 concession) through the door of 102 Bridge Street. Please identify your subscription with your house number and street.

Directory of local suppliers

The list will appear in the February newsletter and is online at: osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers

If you have any updates on the listed suppliers please contact Jane Buekett (see below).

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

OIRA committee

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

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Newsletter distribution: Anna Truelove.

OIRA Newsletter supplement – November 2023

Road treatments

I hope there weren't too many parking problems while the recent roadworks took place all over the Island. I'm sorry the councils couldn't afford to resurface all the streets in the same way they did East Street and North Street. Those two streets were in the worst state – possibly about to "fail". That process costs many times more than the usual process, which is known as "minor patching and a micro-asphalt surface laid to seal the existing surface, then relining". It is also known as "veneer surfacing". I know the loose gravel is annoying. They have promised to send a sweeper down to sort that out. I hope it will soon bed in and look nice and smooth.

Osney Bridge

At last there is some news from Thames Water about repairing the underside of Osney Bridge (which is badly rusted) and replacing the water pipe underneath it. If all goes according to plan, they hope to start full-scale work in February of next year by constructing a temporary scaffolding bridge to the north of the current bridge which will carry a temporary water-pipe. In April they then hope finally to remove most of the temporary waterpipe that is half-blocking the east-bound carriageway. They will have to keep the two end sections, but the bridge should be safer for cyclists than it is at present. Very unfortunately it may be necessary to have single-lane traffic over the bridge from February 2024 all the way to March 2025.

New PCSO

We have a keen new PCSO for the Botley Road area and Jericho. Her address is Carol.Robinson@thamesvalley.police.uk and her number is 07890 317380. Please contact her about any non-urgent crime, anti-social behaviour or similar concerns in the area, but for a crime in progress phone 999.

Parking permits

Now that residents' parking permits are virtual, it is not so easy to see if a vehicle is illegally parked. To check this, you can either search for "parking permits" on www.oxfordshire.gov.uk or phone the helpline – 0845 337 1138.

Best wishes

Susanna

