

# Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

## A celebration of the everyday

Mark Van Oss, East Street

I recall a great exhibition of paintings 'Dreams of the everyday'. They were not political or shocking but very moving in their celebration of the everyday. A vase of flowers on a sunlit table, a few ducks below willows on a river, very like life on our small island with its few and quiet streets and big skies.

*Oira*, I am told, in older Japanese coincidentally means 'we' as well as being the initials of the Osney Island Residents' Association. Our Google email group is such a celebration of the everyday too.

From anxiety and protest about off-island traffic turmoil to a collection for the retiring 'postie', books or furniture being left outside doors for others on our island, a festival of very local beers, a missing cat then found by a neighbour. When I first moved to the island I found the Google group to be an instant very likeable family, like *Friends* or *The Archers* and one that I could call on for help.



## Open Doors walking tours and exhibition 12 September, 11.30 a.m.–3 p.m.

This year marks the 175th anniversary of Osney Town. To celebrate, we are organising walking tours of the island and an exhibition of found objects, as part of Oxford Open Doors weekend.

Led by OIRA chair Sarah Parker, the 90-minute tours (10 a.m. and 1 p.m.) will explore the social and architectural history of Osney Town. The exhibition will bring together residents' finds and archive items to show how the low-lying island was raised from a rubbish dump to a homogenous Victorian development that remains largely intact.

Do you have an interesting story, document or object connected to Osney's history? Something you have dug up in your garden, found on the towpath, inherited with your house? Would you be willing to lend it for the exhibition on 12 September?

If so, we would love to hear from you. Please email your stories, object details and a photograph to [osiracommittee@gmail.com](mailto:osiracommittee@gmail.com).

## Teenagers today...

...all they do is sit at home on their phones, right? Here, some young people on Osney put the record straight.

Hannah Farnsworth, South Street: Part of the way I spend my free time is volunteering with Madrina Oxfordshire. Madrina is a charity which provides assistance to teenagers who can't get clothes for their school end-of-GCSEs prom for a multitude of different reasons. The Oxfordshire branch is based in Abingdon where young people can visit the shop to try on different outfits. The Madrina team also visits schools with enough eligible students so they can pick their outfits. As part of my volunteering, I have modelled in two fashion shows which raise awareness of the help that's available.



▲ Hannah modelling a prom dress

Betty Crawshaw, Bridge Street: I'm at Matthew Arnold School. Outside of school I go to Mini Professionals Dance Academy five times a week. As well as classes in advanced lyrical and jazz, funk, and ballet, I am also part of the squad team and have been a member of the competition team for



▲ Betty winning first prize

the last 2 years, performing in competitions all over the UK.

Sonny Crawshaw: I go to West Oxford Primary School, where I do a lot of sport. I was involved in Quad Kids where I ran in the 100 m and 400 m and threw a Vortex Howler 34 m! I played in a cricket tournament for school and we came third in Oxfordshire. I also like to play golf. Outside school I play for Oxford City Football Club in the Junior Premier League as a centre forward.



**Ela Ergeneli, East Street:** I've just finished my A-levels so I find myself with a lot of free time, but I get depressed if I'm stuck inside on my phone. So...I have a part time job at a chocolate shop, I look after horses with my mum, I taught myself Turkish via Duolingo (although that's technically on the phone) and sat an exam for it this summer... so now I've decided to try Arabic. Other than that I try to see my friends when possible and I plan to go travelling for my gap year in January, so I've been doing a lot of research for that.

My sister Lily has an active social life, especially in the nice weather. We've recently been given two paddle boards and she is always trying to get us to go out on them...even in the dark.

**Avalyn and Ruby-Ray Spooner-Young, East Street:** With the help of her younger sister Ruby-Ray, Avalyn ran a lemonade and cake sale on East Street one hot July weekend. She sold freshly squeezed lemonade, iced tea, cake and energy balls to passers by, including thirsty kayakers on the river.



Avalyn is saving up for something she's wanted for a long time. Apart from the refreshment stall, she has completed star charts (lists of chores) at home and played violin concerts to friends and family.

## The Osney emerald

**Will Scarratt, Bridge Street**

On a hot July day, a gleaming green willow emerald damselfly drifted into the garden on a warm breeze, landing on swaying honeysuckle flowers with its wings spread wide, quickly consuming its freshly caught insect prey. I watched as it cleaned its dark red mouthparts with huge, spiky forelegs that come together, when flying, to form a net, which it uses to catch other flying insects for food.

It is the only damselfly in the UK to lay its overwintering eggs under the bark of willow trees, where the larvae hatch in the spring and drop from the trees into the water below to feed on aquatic organisms. The egg-laying sites create rows of galls on the willow branches that can be seen throughout the winter.

This species was only discovered in the UK in 2007 but has since spread widely in southern England, and is quite common around Oxford, from July to October, sometimes into November.

## Phil's send off

Islanders were joined at The Holly Bush by our neighbours from Mill Street, some of Phil's colleagues and his son to celebrate his retirement as postman on 18 July. Osney collected a remarkable £935 for Phil, and Mill



Street also had a collection. There were flowers from the allotments, a spectacular cake, and an enormous card signed by much of the island.

## Tea on the Towpath: come rain or shine

**Alison Burdett, East Street**

If there was ever proof that a little British summer weather can't defeat Osney, Tea on the Towpath on 6 June was it. A small army of gazebo-erectors sprang into action, transforming the towpath into a surprisingly cosy café where tea, coffee, cake and conversation flowed freely.

And what cakes! Once again our island bakers outdid themselves.

A huge thank you to Jude Carroll (assisted by her grandson, a remarkably effective salesman), Bea Stevenson, Lesley Casey, Violetta Splitter, Julia Marsh, Michael Rawson, Susan & Duncan Hutchinson, Becca Holyhead, Cathryn McNaughton, Zoi Katsirma, Ann Andrews, Jen Meakin, Bianca Elgar, James Allen, Debbie Hall, Uttara Natarajan, Suzanne Jeffrey, Maureen Ergeneli, Jessica Edgar, Bob & Louise Summers, Cara Berry and Paula Sturmer for baking, serving, lending, lifting, erecting, dismantling and making the whole thing happen.

And thank you to everyone who came along. Together we raised over £400, some of which has already funded a new replacement planter on Bridge Street.

This year Open Gardens took a well-earned break. We hope it will be back next year, but we need more willing volunteers. To find out what's involved, email Eleanor: [e.dickey@reading.ac.uk](mailto:e.dickey@reading.ac.uk)

## Chatty Wednesday

**Eli Harriss, Bridge Street**

Osney Chatty Wednesday is a gathering of neighbours on the third Wednesday of the month, 7–9 p.m. at one of the Osney pubs, currently The Punter. Please join us at the large table. Chats for the rest of the year: 19 August, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November, 16 December.

## Osney Island Boat Club

**Fiona Ravenscroft, South Street**

There's still time to join the boat club and enjoy the river this summer. We have two canoes and four kayaks available for members to take out at any time.

Membership is £60 per year per household (renewal 1 April) plus a £30 joining fee. Membership provides access to boats, paddles, buoyancy aids and river licences. If you are interested please contact me:

[osneyislandbbc@gmail.com](mailto:osneyislandbbc@gmail.com).

## News from St Frideswide

**Rev Rachel Cross**

In Christian scripture, hospitality is a mark of faithful discipleship. Jesus consistently welcomed all and challenged exclusion. At St Frideswide we aim to reflect God's own generous love and welcome.

We continue with our free weekly curry, 3.30–5.30 p.m. Fridays. We recently set a new record by serving just over 180 portions to eat in or take away. In the extreme hot weather we are also opening the church when we can to provide a cool space for all.



## Mick Bayliss remembered

Kate Stewart, East Street

Michael (Mick) Bayliss (1945–2026) was an Oxonian and Osneyite through and through. He and his wife Jan lived here for many years – in Mick's case, around 40 – latterly in East Street. They were an attractive couple, regularly to be seen walking or cycling together, playing bar billiards in the local, laughing on their front step or embarking for an evening's picnic cruise aboard *Mickey Rovinj*.

Mick's interests extended far beyond his many workplaces. He was immersed in this area, in whose flora and fauna he found solace after Jan's early death in 2009.

Accompanied by Bo, his golden retriever, Mick walked downstream to Hinksey pools every afternoon and round Osney Mead every evening. Come spring, he set out on his boat to nearby reedbeds in search of adult cuckoo arrivals, recording their laying patterns and the behaviour of their 'hosts'. A locally renowned and published ornithologist, Mick famously worked with David Attenborough on the BBC TV documentary *Cuckoo*. Mick loved poetry, music and a pint and was an accomplished draftsman, cartoonist and photographer. While first and foremost a family man, he was well connected and liked throughout his neighbourhood. He had a wicked sense of humour.

He is mourned by his family and missed by his many friends.

## Johnny Morrison commemorative bench

Have you noticed the smart new bench outside The Punter? If so, you might be wondering about Johnny Morrison, to whose memory it is dedicated.



▲ Johnny (holding pint) outside The Punter, during a UK visit last year

The bench was funded by members of Oxford Cycling Club and other cycling friends of Johnny. The Punter is a regular watering hole for OCC at the end of their Saturday rides. Johnny was a founding member of the club (and before that a stalwart of Zappi's Cycling Club). His club colleagues describe him as 'a true gem of a man' who supported fellow members and nurtured new riders. His golden rule was 'to never, ever, take oneself too seriously' and 'rather annoyingly, he was devilishly handsome too'.

Johnny and his wife Sarah ran a catering business in Oxford for many years, before returning with their daughter Izzie to Johnny's native Wollongong, New South Wales, in 2022. Here Johnny became captain of a local fire station. He died in November 2025 after falling from his bike while out riding with friends.

A QR code on the armrest support of the bench gives a link to more information.

## Recipe: portokalopita (Greek orange pie)

Zoi Katsirma, West Street

**Syrup:** Boil 400 g sugar, 200 g water, 400 g orange juice, zest of 1 orange, juice of half a lemon, and 1 cinnamon stick for 6 minutes. Let cool.

**Pie:** Tear 450 g filo pastry into pieces, spread on a large tray, and dry in the oven at 120°C (fan) for 10–15 minutes.

Beat 250 g melted margarine with 100 g sugar. Add 5 eggs and 200 g strained yogurt, beat again. Mix in zest of 2 oranges, 20 g baking powder, 2 sachets vanilla sugar, a pinch of salt, and 200 g orange marmalade. Fold in the dried filo, trying not to break the pieces too much.

Pour into a greased 37 x 25cm pan. Bake at 170°C for 35–40 minutes.

Pour the cold syrup over the hot pie. Serves 12.

## Directory of local suppliers: updated

The directory has been checked and contact details updated.

Thanks for Mia Bull for her work on this. Please help keep it up to date – contact Jane Buekett if you find someone is no longer available.

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

### Baby kit

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

### Bicycles, repairs and accessories

Jon Wyver: 07842 901873, [info@oxbicycles.co.uk](mailto:info@oxbicycles.co.uk),

[www.facebook.com/oxbicycles](https://www.facebook.com/oxbicycles) (will deliver and pick up in Oxford free of charge).

### Building and roof repair

Rob Cassettari, North Hinksey Construction: 01865

242312/07977 152884/07900 881511, [robnhc@virginmedia.com](mailto:robnhc@virginmedia.com)

Everest Roofing Ltd: 01865 881685, [enquiries@everestroofing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@everestroofing.co.uk), [everestroofing.co.uk](http://everestroofing.co.uk)

Paul Hackett, P & R Roofing Ltd (Horspath): 01865 875523, 07836 687672 [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  
608649, 07462 971475,  
[info@kmbuildersoxford.co.uk](mailto:info@kmbuildersoxford.co.uk),  
[kmbuildersoxford.co.uk](http://kmbuildersoxford.co.uk)  
Oxford Roofing and Maintenance: 01865  
820323, 07468 429000,  
[oxfordroofingandmaintenance.co.uk](http://oxfordroofingandmaintenance.co.uk)  
Mike Shephard, MJ Construction  
(Abingdon): 07834 321274,  
[mjconstruction@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mjconstruction@hotmail.co.uk) (larger jobs)

### **Carpenters and flooring**

Leo Eastley: 07496 701244,  
[leoeastley@gmail.com](mailto:leoeastley@gmail.com) (cabinet maker/  
carpenter, lives on Osney)  
Jonathan Everett, Lockwood Carpentry:  
07597 952381, [j.everett.lwc@gmail.com](mailto:j.everett.lwc@gmail.com)  
Carlos Pereira: [carpenteroxford22@gmail.com](mailto:carpenteroxford22@gmail.com)

### **Car repairs and MOTs**

Oxon Autos in Grove near Wantage (will  
come to you): 07899 762949, [oxon.autos@live.co.uk](mailto:oxon.autos@live.co.uk),  
[oxonautos.co.uk](http://oxonautos.co.uk)

### **Cat sitting/feeding**

Shirley Gibson: 07510 991213 (Binsey)

### **Chimney sweep**

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

### **Cleaners**

Edna: 07548 384737

### **Clothing alterations**

Bespoke Alterations (Makespace, Hayfield  
Road): 07835 098 496, [www.bespokealterationsoxford.co.uk](http://www.bespokealterationsoxford.co.uk)

### **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: 01491 577 560/01491 577  
560, [stonehousewaterproofing.co.uk](http://stonehousewaterproofing.co.uk)

### **Electricians**

Baldwin Appliances: 01865 377484,  
[enquiries@baldwinappliances.com](mailto:enquiries@baldwinappliances.com), [www.baldwinappliances.com](http://www.baldwinappliances.com)  
Jamie Cooke: 07775 700300,  
[info@jcelectrical.services](mailto:info@jcelectrical.services)  
DEC Electricians: 01865 725453,  
[mail@decoxford.co.uk](mailto:mail@decoxford.co.uk), [dec-oxfordltd.co.uk](http://dec-oxfordltd.co.uk)

### **Footcare in your home**

Kate Gleave, Nurture Footcare: 07952  
127534, [kategleave79@gmail.com](mailto:kategleave79@gmail.com)

### **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**

Rory Whelehan: 07341 849035,  
[rory@rorlyn.co.uk](mailto:rory@rorlyn.co.uk) (gardener, lawn/  
hedge cutting, general tidying)  
Clive: 07787 741968

### **Green builders and installers**

Energy My Way: 01865 856930,  
[info@energymyway.co.uk](mailto:info@energymyway.co.uk),  
[www.energymyway.co.uk](http://www.energymyway.co.uk)  
JoJu Solar: 01865 403336, [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)  
Greg Zasuwa: [clearviewforyou@gmail.com](mailto:clearviewforyou@gmail.com)  
(also window cleaning)

### **Handymen**

Mark Morris, Botley: 07970 342375 (small  
jobs, minor electrics and plumbing)  
Colin Stanley, The Small Odd Jobs  
Company: 07804 908545

### **Locksmith**

Ross Blaikie, Lockforce Oxford: 07588  
844042, [www.lockforce.co.uk/locksmith/Oxford/](http://www.lockforce.co.uk/locksmith/Oxford/)

### **Newsagent delivering to Osney**

Mr Patel, Court Candy Shop, 65  
Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6HJ: 01865  
515506/07917 990029,  
[court candyshop@googlemail.com](mailto:court candyshop@googlemail.com)

### **Painters and decorators**

Steve Brierty: 07850 357414  
Paul Buckle: 07920 099196  
John Chappell: 07985 490970  
Dan Driscoll: 07934 718788,  
[danieldriscoll63@gmail.com](mailto:danieldriscoll63@gmail.com) (also home  
repairs)  
Brendan McCarthy: 07982 614633

### **Pests**

Avenge: 07879 405060 (based in Binsey)

### **Plumbing and heating**

APV Boiler Services: 01865 377264  
Jules Jones (formerly Smith):  
07790 961395,  
[reallygoodplumbing@outlook.com](mailto:reallygoodplumbing@outlook.com)  
Oxtech Facilities: 01865 602994, 07868  
190748, [www.oxtechfacilities.com](http://www.oxtechfacilities.com)

### **Removals**

A. G. Jacob and Sons: 07977 963929,  
01865 762524 [www.agjacobandson.co.uk](http://www.agjacobandson.co.uk)  
House and Carriage: 01608 811444/07769  
585988

Martini Moves: 07495 908330/07887  
631348, [martinimovesremovals@gmail.com](mailto:martinimovesremovals@gmail.com),  
[www.martinimoves.com](http://www.martinimoves.com)

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

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

### **Upholsterers**

Annabel Share: [annaburt@gmail.com](mailto:annaburt@gmail.com)  
Adriano Ribeiro: 07771 560658 (Cowley,  
will collect small items)

### **Window cleaning**

James Middlebrook, Klenza Exterior  
Cleaning: 07957 410771 (pure water  
cleaning, no ladder)  
Torridon Slaney: 07746 356307  
Greg Zasuwa: 07824 644280,  
[clearviewforyou@gmail.com](mailto:clearviewforyou@gmail.com) (pure water  
cleaning, also clears gutters)

### **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**

Alison Burdett [alison.burdett@gmail.com](mailto:alison.burdett@gmail.com)  
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Sarah Parker (chair) [sarahparker\\_29@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahparker_29@hotmail.com) 07834 772016, Karen  
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Stewart [kate.stewart1908@gmail.com](mailto:kate.stewart1908@gmail.com).

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