

OXFORD PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER NO.78

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2007

Welcome to Issue number 78 of OxPA's Newsletter!

As your Newsletter Editor I often grumble in this paragraph about pavements or puddles or some other obstruction to walking. However, having just returned from a visit to Las Cruces, New Mexico in the USA, I have had a perspective on a city in which everybody is expected to drive. Many roads have no pavements at all. Cyclists are rare and cycle on the few pavements at all times. There are very few pedestrian crossings across the wide sweeping roads. Before and after school times the roads are full of cars, and to someone from Britain there is a marked absence of children; none of them walk or cycle as they are all driven, even the shortest distances imaginable. People exercise in gyms which they drive to. I returned to Oxford to delight in this city in which people at least do walk, even if we have barriers to complain of!

- 1) **Jericho Boatyard.** The proposal by Spring Residences to turn the old Jericho Boatyard into a block of flats will be debated by members of Central South West Area Committee **at the Town Hall from 6pm on Wednesday December 12th.** Members of the public are welcome to come along. It would be very good if representatives of walkers' groups spoke at this meeting, about the effect on the view from the canal, a popular walking route between north Oxford/Port Meadow/Jericho, and the railway station/Hythe Bridge Street.
- 2) **Since the Westgate development has been delayed** by a pending Public Inquiry into the plan to evict and demolish Abbey Place housing, Capital Shopping and City Planners are looking to speed up its start by allowing major car parking on Oxpens Meadow Recreation ground. This will be decided by Strategic Development and Control Committee on Wednesday 28th November, starting at 2.30pm. Members of the public may attend and speak at the discretion of the Chair of the committee, Councillor Elise Benjamin, who can be contacted on Oxford 202257, or at cllrebenjamin@oxford.gov.uk. Oxpens Meadow Recreational ground is the land around the icerink, and is the only public green space in that area. It is currently used by walkers, children, fairs and visiting circuses.
- 3) **Please encourage friends and family to join OxPA;** for very little money they will get this excellent Newsletter 6 times a year, the opportunity to participate in fun and interesting debates and events, and a lot of useful information!
- 4) Corinne intends to apply to the Co-op for a grant to produce **the OxPA book of walks.** Please submit suggestions for walks to be included, by contacting Corinne (details at end of Newsletter). There is still space for a few more walks!

- 5) **Streets for People on September 22nd was an excellent day and good fun was had by all.** On Broad Street there was a market, and various shows and events. Cafes provided food and tables and chairs on the road. People could try out rollerblades, with everything provided, in the safety of a street without even delivery vehicles. The highlight of the day was Peter Bearder's poem, about walking in Oxford, which is included with the Newsletter. **Thanks to everyone who helped make this a special and memorable event.**
- 6) **A report has been issued by the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety, which contains a wide ranging and authoritative analysis of road safety and proposes actions for 'beyond 2010'.** A key set of recommendations concerns traffic speed limits. In particular, the report recommends that: a default speed limit of 20mph in all built up areas is implemented in ways that achieve high levels of compliance; priority is given to early type approval of time over distance cameras for use at speeds below 30 mph; and that, in the next round of Local Transport Plans, advice should be given to local authorities to look at extending application of Manual for Streets. The report points out that "The reduction in limit has a positive effect on casualty levels. A TRL study found that, in a review of 250 schemes across England, Wales and Scotland: average speeds fell by 9 mph; accidents fell by 60% (a year); child accidents fell by 67%; cyclist accidents fell by 29%; traffic flow was reduced by 27%; although flows on the surrounding boundary roads increased by 12%." **The report can be seen on <http://www.pacts.org.uk/>.**
- 7) **Cowley Road CCTV cameras.** A debate is ongoing about whether these would be a useful way forward in a highly populated residential area where there is a lot of night-time activity, and people coming in from outside the area to shop, eat and party. Those in favour of CCTV installation argue that cameras reduce crime and make people feel safer. However it is turning out hard to prove this, since images on cameras are frequently too blurred to be of any use, and even where they are clear, the crime has already been committed by the time the images are viewed. Arguably it costs far more to install a CCTV camera than to pay 3-4 police officers to patrol the same area for a year. Residents in city centre areas add that the cameras in the city centre have simply meant anti-social behaviour has shifted from areas covered to residential streets where there are no cameras. The debate is currently ongoing, with fierce arguments for and against. **If you wish to be involved, you can contact the Chair of East Oxford Parliament, Councillor Craig Simmons, on craig@greenoxford.com.**

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday November 27th 2007 at 7pm in the Town Hall. Please bring a relative, friend, or anyone who may be interested. As the 4th Tuesday in December is Christmas Day, there is no meeting in December. Your Newsletter Editor wishes everyone a very happy festive season, and plenty of good walking in the New Year!

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Angry Pedestrian - Peter Bearder

I don't wait for busses in the pouring rain
I don't get into arguments with taxis
You won't find me in a one-way-system
I'm voting with my feet

I don't fling myself around in metal boxes
At 95 miles an hour
Tiredness won't kill me and I can drink what I like
As I stumble home late on Friday night

I'm ahead of the rest on energy use
Transport costs only cover my feet
I have no gym subscription or swimming card
I exercise between A and B

I'm a healthy pedestrian
I'm a healthy pedestrian
I stamp my feet on the pavement
I'm a healthy pedestrian

I'm a healthy pedestrian?
Hang on a minute!
I didn't have asthma until I moved here
Inhalation, annihilation
I'm just out for a breath of fresh air

Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide
Benzene, particulates, fine dust, soot
Respiratory illness, I'm starting to wheeze
Cardiovascular disease

Asthma, cancer, shortened lifespan
Adverse reproductive outcomes
Adverse reproductive outcomes?
Adverse reproductive outcomes?!

I'm a muted pedestrian
I'm a mutant pedestrian
I stamp my three feet on the pavement
I'm an angry pedestrian

I wouldn't take my Zebra
Across this Zebra crossing
I've been stood here for 5 minutes plus
And no single vehicle stopping

So I carry on along the side of the road
When I stopped dead in my tracks
By a gas guzzling, pavement guzzling 4x4
Parked so I can't get round

So I joined the Pavement Association
Pavement associate
I prowl the streets with stickers in my hand
Pavements are for YOU KNOW WHAT!

I'm an angry pedestrian
From the Pavement Association
I stamp my feet on the pavement
I'm an angry pedestrian

In the beginning there was mostly forest
First came primate, monkey ape then man
Then came the gas guzzling, 7 litre 4x4s
Hydrocarbons CO2 and oil wars

Environmental mental, mental destruction
The cities vomited tarmac
Then Man slapped on the sun cream as the world became hotter
And the climate change lapped at our toes

Then we started to step out of our vehicles
And ran up to the trees and the hills
In this new age of survival homosapien had evolved
Into homopedestrian

I'm happy pedestrian
I'm a homopedestrian
I stamp my feet on the pavement
I'm a happy pedestrian

Keep Britain tidy
It's the game we can win
That means pick up your rubbish
And put it in the bin

And if there is one thing I hate more than litter bugs
Its tourists that refuse to walk in single file
And its not that I don't like bus drivers
I just wish they'd smile - once in a while

You see every time a bus tries to kill a cyclist
The cyclist moves onto the pavement
But that's my territory, I was here first
Cyclists unite! We're being driven from the earth!!

I'm an angry pedestrian
I'm an angry pedestrian
I stamp my feet on the pavement!
You stamp your feet on the pavement!
We stamp our feet on the pavement!
We are angry pedestrians