

# Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

[www.osneyisland.co.uk](http://www.osneyisland.co.uk)  
March / April 2013

## COMING UP

### OIRA AGM

*From the Chair:* The one and only OIRA AGM is coming up! And you are cordially invited to it! It will be held on Wednesday, 24 April, at 7pm in the West Oxford Community Centre. The agenda includes the usual business items, including approval of the reports by the current Chair and the Treasurer but also the election of officers for the forthcoming year (a new chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary) as well as committee members. However, there will be also updates on various issues affecting the island, like the planned raft race in summer, the Osney Micro-Hydro Scheme and the planned development for Frideswide Square. Note: Each officer is elected for a term of one year and each committee member is elected for a term of three years. If you'd like to stand as a committee member or officer, please make sure that you submit your name to the secretary, Steve Lynam (11 South St, tel:201334) no later than 14 days prior to the AGM. Please give your contact details and the position for which you'd like to stand, together with a proposer and a seconder, both of whom must live on Osney Island. OIRA is your association, so please come along and help to shape the future direction of your community.

### The Boat Club AGM

*From Simon Stubbings:* The Osney Island Boat Club exists to provide boating facilities for Island residents. Unfortunately, the boat shed on the towpath can only accommodate a limited number of craft. However, one of these belongs to the Club and it is available for use by members. In addition, other members are often prepared to lend their boats out. The Club's AGM will be held in the Punter on Thursday 11 April at 8:00pm. Whilst the purpose of the meeting is to dispose the routine matters of election of officers, approval of accounts, and fixing of subscriptions for the coming year, it nevertheless provides an opportunity for members and prospective members of the Club to get together, enjoy a drink and find out more about how the Club operates. All are welcome to attend.

### West Oxford Beer Festival

*From David Jeffry:* This mini-festival features a range of local ales, all brewed within 30 miles of Oxford, and is always a sell-out success. The next WOBfest is on Saturday 22nd June, 7-11pm in the West Oxford Community Centre. Entrance is by ticket only priced £5 that gains you entry to WOBfest and includes a commemorative pint glass keepsake. If you are interested



in purchasing tickets, please contact me by email: [david@wobfest.co.uk](mailto:david@wobfest.co.uk). or via our Facebook page (just search for "WOBfest"). If you click on the "like" button you will get all our updates. As we get closer to the date we will also be updating our website: [www.wobfest.co.uk](http://www.wobfest.co.uk), including the all-important beer list. Please get in contact if you are interested in helping out - selling tickets, pouring pints, or by becoming a beer sponsor, either corporate or individual. Without our sponsors and volunteers the festival would not be possible. We look forward to seeing you and your friends.

### Osney Island Community Raft Race

*From Karen Brooks:* We now have interest from 8+ teams and I have even heard some teams have started building!!! We have tweaked the date - it is now Saturday 6th July. Events will kick off with the duck race at 4pm followed by Tea on the Towpath and music. The raft race will start at 6pm to minimise the likelihood of being mown down by once-a-year boat hirers. More details will follow shortly with rules and regs along with an online form to register your raft team. Put the date in the diary, get your raft engineers planning and start your training programme now! If you are willing to bake cakes, help with teas, marshalling the duck race etc. please contact: Karen Brooks [karen@chillipots.co.uk](mailto:karen@chillipots.co.uk). If you would like to provide live music on the day contact: [elizabeth@newberyandengland.com](mailto:elizabeth@newberyandengland.com) or [jude@judecarroll.co.uk](mailto:jude@judecarroll.co.uk).

## ISLAND NEWS

### Grit Bins

*From Steve Lynam:* As the next cold spell hits us a reminder to everyone that the grit is there to be used in cold weather by anyone on the Island to minimise the risks of ice and snow. In general, we want firstly to ensure that pedestrians can get on and off the Island before we deal with concerns about road vehicles. Snow shovels are stored at the Punters. Please return them to the Punters when you have finished using them. The Council provides the grit free of charge, but only for use on public land, ie pavements, footpaths and roads. They told us that if they detect misuse of the grit (e.g. if people use it on their private footpaths) they will charge us for refills. OIRA's resources will not stretch to having to pay for such refills, so any misuse will kill this initiative.

### Flooding on the Island

*From Simon Collings:* As a member of the Oxford Flood Alliance steering group and following concerns expressed in the last newsletter about flooding, I thought it might be useful if I explained a bit about why

Osney Island floods. The Island is effectively a mound of gravel in the Thames floodplain, topped with a layer of clay. Gravel is highly permeable to water, so when river levels are high, the levels of water in the ground also rise. The southern end of the island is lower than the north, with the lowest point around the junction of South Street and Bridge Street, so this is where rising groundwater is first seen. In the kinds of flood events we've experienced over the last 10–15 years, it is this groundwater that causes most problems. When water starts coming out of the storm drains in South Street, in the Bridge Street extension and at the top of West Street this is not caused by blocked drains, but by the drains filling up with groundwater. A green box at the corner of West and South Streets contains two small pumps. These keep down the levels of water in the drains by pumping it out into the back stream. They are designed to cope with normal rainfall. When the volumes of groundwater are beyond the capability of these pumps water starts to lie in the street. In recent events, when the small pumps have been overwhelmed the Environmental Agency has deployed a mobile 6 inch pump to take groundwater out of the gully pot opposite the end of Doyley Road. This water goes into the weir pool by the lock. On 27 December 2012, when water started building up in the street at this low point of the island, I called the EA duty officer. He started the pump within the hour and the water cleared.

#### **What's the risk?**

The greatest risk of property flooding therefore comes from groundwater. This rises slowly, affecting the lowest-lying areas first, and can eventually come up through the floor of some houses. Sandbags are not effective in preventing this type of flooding.

There is also a risk of flooding from the river as it tops the banks. The areas where this happens first are at the top of West Street and in some gardens that back onto the Osney Stream at the southern end of the island. The City Council is implementing a scheme to protect the most vulnerable homes, in South Street and Bridge Street extension, from groundwater and the Osney Stream.

#### **What you can do**

The lag time between heavy rainfall and water coming downstream from the Cotswolds is 4-6 days. During this time river levels rise slowly and steadily. There should be plenty of time for those in lower-lying properties to move possessions upstairs or raise them off the ground to protect them. In the event of a major flood, of 1947 proportions, it would be hard to prevent water from entering houses because of the rising groundwater. Moving possessions and planning where to stay, what you need to take and where to take your car/bike are probably the most useful things you can do. Floods on that scale happen very infrequently.

#### **Further information**

You can contact OFA at [contactofa@yahoo.com](mailto:contactofa@yahoo.com) with individual enquiries. For periodic updates, ask to be added to our mailing list. OFA website: [oxfordfloodalliance.org.uk](http://oxfordfloodalliance.org.uk) Environment Agency website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/default.aspx](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/default.aspx)

## **Redevelopment of the West Way Shopping Centre, Botley**

*From John Clements On behalf of West Way*

**Community Concern:** Many people outside Botley have now become aware from the press that a major redevelopment of the West Way shopping centre is planned. The Vale of White Horse District Council who owned the precinct and office area have now sold this to Doric Properties. Doric are in discussion with other adjacent landowners to extend the development over a larger area to include Elms Parade (the older block facing the main road), Field House and land owned by the Baptist and Anglican churches.

Doric have held two consultation meetings for Botley residences and an outline plan shown there included the possibility of student accommodation, a cinema, and a large supermarket as well as smaller retail units, the library and community space. A number of residents, concerned about the lack of opportunity for independent assessment of how people feel about the plans, have formed West Way Community Concern (WWCC) and plan to carry out their own survey through local free publications in Botley and Cumnor which will reach all households, followed by a public meeting. WWCC realises that many residents in West Oxford also use West Way and may not have the opportunity to have their voices heard, so are now inviting those interested to contact them by email at [westwayconcern@gmail.com](mailto:westwayconcern@gmail.com). The survey will be available on-line after it is published at the end of March and you will be contacted with the web address to complete it. If, in the meantime, you have any queries or would like any further information, please send WWCC an email at the above address. We are committed to providing all users of West Way with an independent voice and look forward to hearing from you.

## **West Oxford Community Primary**

*From Suzanne Jeffry:* 2013 sees the centenary of the building of West Oxford school. The school is starting a year of activities and celebration from the anniversary of the building work starting in 1913 to the first pupils arriving in 1914. If you are a former pupil, teacher, governor - or know someone who was - we would love to hear from you to build up a history of the school. Please contact Suzanne Jeffry, 13 South Street or [suzanne@dands.org.uk](mailto:suzanne@dands.org.uk)

## **Five minutes from the station**

**A regular whimsical slot from Jane Buckett of South Street.**

One of the advantages of living in Osney is the ease of commuting to London by train. Or so we like to think. Recently, deleting a series of text messages from my partner on my mobile phone, I realised what a sorry tale they told:

'Am on train but it's not moving. May be a little late.'

'Stuck behind the local stopping service. Probably another 15 mins.'

'Just outside Oxford station. Should be home fairly soon.'

'Hi. Only just past Slough. Probably running 20 mins late.'

'Even more delayed. Not sure by how much. Train not moving.'

'On train to Reading that is barely moving. Train to Oxford seemed to be fictional.'

'Just seen your message. My train this evening 20 mins late.'

'Hi. Predictably the train isn't moving. Problem with train ahead of us. Don't know how long we'll be delayed.'

If any News International journalist would like to hack into my phone and publish these scandalous revelations, he'd be welcome.

### **St Frideswide Events**

Thursday 28th March, 7:00pm, Maundy Thursday service

Friday 29th March, 2:00pm, Good Friday service

Sunday 31st March, 10:30am, Easter Sunday

Thursday 25th April, 7:30pm, St James Singers Concert

### **John Holmes**

We are very sorry to report the death of John Holmes (also known as Jack or Les) who passed away on 18 January aged 88. He had lived on the Island since 1936 and over the years was a member of the Democrats and the West Oxford Bowls Club.

### **Willow garden plant supports**

*From Bob Summers:* I make garden plant supports to order using green or brown willow. There are different designs available including wigwam, beehive, cylinder etc., made to your specifications. Reasonable rates. Bob Summers, 69 Bridge Street, 01865 721695.

### **For sale**

Good quality 'A' frame chicken coop £100 contact Bianca Elgar mob: 07855 718850.

Guitar Hero III solo guitar pack with game and wireless guitar controller. As new £offer tel: 793360.

### **Eggs**

Eggsetcetera, our local grocery store, is having a revamp with lots more deli and a self-service counter. Jo, the owner, is always willing to listen if you want him to stock something particular, provided there is enough demand.

### **Saving money on water bills**

Following a tip in the Guardian which said if your house is not suitable for water meter (many aren't on the Island), and you are a sole occupier, water companies will put you on an 'average household charge'. They don't advertise this because the savings can be significant. Indeed, I've just had my annual water bill reduced by £143.20! Phone Thames Water on 0845 9200 800 for further information.

## **USEFUL NUMBERS**

*City Council*, tel: 249811 (now 24 hours); *County Council*, tel: 792422; *Alan Armitage*, tel: 516115; *Susanna Pressel*, 7 Rawlinson Rd Oxford OX2 6UE, tel: 554001 email: cllrspressel@oxford.gov.uk; *City Councillors: Colin Cook*, tel: 272548 (day) 721844 (evening) email: cllrccook@oxford.gov.uk and *Susanna* (as above); *Community Beat Officer PC Jan Warner*, tel:

101; refuse, recycling, free collections, bulky items, street cleaning, drains and flooding tel: 252900; *free advice on energy*, tel: 252197; *noise complaints*, tel: 249811; *Community Centre* tel: 245761; *on-street fines*, tel: 247090; *car park fines*, tel: 252489; *furniture recycling*, tel: 763698; *residents parking permits*, tel: 0845 634 4466; *bike theft and abandoned bikes*, tel: 0845 8505 505; *abandoned and unlicensed vehicles*, tel: 252900.

## **THE DIRECTORY**

The following list is compiled from Islanders recommendations only. No one pays for an entry and suppliers are removed if there are reports of unreasonable rates or service. The list is only as good as the updates so please let me know if anyone has retired or dropped out for other reasons.

### **New recommendations**

I would like to recommend an electrician www.tbarneselectrical.com tbarneselectrical@gmail.com ('very efficient, reliable and punctual').

### **Removals (home/abroad) and storage**

House and Carriage tel: 01608 811444 or mob: 07769 585988 (local, reliable, polite, careful, and stress-free, for a reasonable price!)

Tiling/Floors/Bathrooms/Kitchens: Nick Barker mob: 07810 356710. Excellent workmanship and extremely reliable, thoroughly recommended.

## **TRIED AND TESTED**

### **General builder**

Chris Willis mob: 07974 155 638 does general building work/carpentry eg (re)hanging doors, laying patios, decking, associated painting/decorating, as well as kitchen/bathroom fitting 'the work was carried out efficiently and to a very high standard'; Pete Coles tel: 01865 776319 mob: 07760 327 057 mainly plumbing but also building ('reliable, helpful and reasonable rates'); R.P. Lepper building specialist, carpentry and joinery tel: 01993 882522 mob: 07801 36 4817 ('excellent, experienced workmanship'); Mark Mavrommatis tel: 07970 974792 to install new windows, repair old ones, paint. (He did an excellent job and at the moment is very reasonably priced because he is re-establishing himself in the Oxford area').

### **Building and roof repairs**

Gosford Builders tel: 01865 373467 mob: 07855 373467 ('good work and very fair rates')

### **Plumbing and heating**

Plumbing and heating: Aquatic tel: 01865 749999 mob: 07050 011884 (highly recommended); Ivan Kilbee tel: 01235 847527 mob: 07771 787585; ('good work and comes on time'); APV Boiler Services tel: 01865 377264 ('friendly, efficient and clean workers'); Colin Pizzie (electricians, plumbing, kitchens, bathrooms) tel: 01235 554655; J Smith tel: 01993 778244, mob: 07790 961395 ('reliable, competent and cheerful')

### **Kitchen fitters**

Benchmark kitchens (helpful kitchen designers with good range of products) tel: 01865 372372

## **Electricians**

RJB Electrical (rewires and new installations) tel: 01865 882723 mob: 07711 934348; J.L. Electrical (rewires, fuse boards, sockets, lights) mob: 07825 133337; DEC Electricians tel: 725453 ('very good'); Baldwin Appliances all white goods tel: 01865 377484 [www.baldwinappliances.com](http://www.baldwinappliances.com);

## **Handyman**

Jon Butt tel: 07766 144116 (lives in Witney but very willing to travel to Oxford); Oliver tel: 0791 900 2222 Oxford-based. Reasonably priced and highly recommended; Andrew Russell ('highly recommended handyman, house and garden maintenance') tel: 01865 453497 mob: 07977 837675

## **Locksmith**

Davies Hardened Security tel: 01865 371816 mob: 07711 625092 ('a rapid response within 24 hours')

## **Chimney sweep**

Dennis Northcott tel: 01235 526617 ('does a good job')

## **Window cleaning**

Paul Smith mob: 0797 9692 895 ('amiable and reliable.')

## **Interior and exterior decoration**

Dave Buckle tel: 848630 evenings ('friendly, efficient and good value'); Steve Brierty 01491 836762 mob: 0785 0357414 ('strongly recommended'); Rob Bennett mob: 0790 5819310 ('highly recommended')

## **Flooring and general carpentry**

Amazon Flooring, Steve mob: 07899 918015 ('highly recommended')

## **Upholstery and sewing services**

Ann Paver tel: 249129 soft furnishing including drapes, curtains but not upholstery ('highly recommended'); Sewing, repairs and alterations: Maria Skoyles tel: 01865 721460 mob: 0759 0264 246

## **Damp**

Damprot Renovations Ltd tel: 01865 742144 ('have done some replastering for us on a couple of occasions and are good').

## **Apple Macs**

Bill Richardson email: [bill@macfaction.co.uk](mailto:bill@macfaction.co.uk) tel: 01865 376100 ('excellent and will come out if not too busy'); Mac Simple is based in Osney Mead tel: 01865 580886 mob: 07974 321064 [www.macsimple.co.uk](http://www.macsimple.co.uk) ('excellent and local'); API Computing contact Andy mob: 07964 796007.

## **Oven Cleaning**

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

## **Removals**

Isis Van Man tel: 01865 422342 mob: 07828 185884 email: [help@Isisvanman.com](mailto:help@Isisvanman.com) ('very helpful and friendly')

## **Hairdressers**

Highly recommended hair stylist who does your hair in the comfort of your own home! (former Art Director Mahogany and Toni & Guy) Sally Horton mob: 07815 445229; Nadine Wright ('ex-Mahogany, cheerful and comes to my home on a Tuesday') mob: 07824 660184.

## **Gardening Services**

Oxford Garden Solutions tel: 01235 201823 mob: 0755 498 7911 ('excellent tree surgery at fair rates - and they cleared up well afterwards'); David Morris tel: 01865

725875 (gardening maintenance and some diy); Eric Bake mob: 07591 157 180 former head gardener at Shotover Estate does garden maintenance and carpentry e.g building and repairing sheds and greenhouses fencing etc (very reasonable rates)

## **Logs**

Logsforall.co.uk offer two sizes of seasoned, sustainably sourced, local, mess free logs, delivered free, the smaller size of log ideal for smaller woodburners/fireplaces. Not the cheapest but excellent burning and reliable delivery service, strongly recommended.

## **Bicycles**

Jon Wyver: bicycles and accessories. He will deliver and pick up in Oxford free of charge. Efficient, friendly and reliable Excellent prices. mob: 07842 901873 email: [info@oxbicycles.co.uk](mailto:info@oxbicycles.co.uk) [www.oxbicycles.co.uk](http://www.oxbicycles.co.uk)

## **Thai massage, Chinese bodywork & acupuncture**

Elizabeth Elliott mob: 07866 759669, offers treatment in her home on Osney. ('Highly recommended: one massage session with her is so relaxing, it's like a two-week holiday.')

## **Boilers**

Jamie Cooke Tel: 07775 700300 email: [JC.Electrical@hotmail.com](mailto:JC.Electrical@hotmail.com) ('excellent service')

## **Lighting**

Oxford Lighting and Electrical Solutions Culham No1 Site, Station Rd, Abingdon OX14 3DA tel: 01865 408522 ('an immense range of light fittings and qualified electricians to install').

## **OIRA COMMITTEE**

*Jude Carroll* 10 East St, tel : 793247 (gazebos); *Georg Deutsch* 4 Bridge St (Chair); *Suzanne Jeffrey* 13 South St tel: 247737 (noticeboard); *Bob Lawrence* 42 West St; *Susan Lloyd* 3 Doyley Rd; *Stephen Lynam* (Secretary and Vice Chair) 11 South St tel: 201334; *Fiona McFarlane* (Treasurer) 11 South St tel: 201334; *Elizabeth Newbery* (Newsletter) 3 North St tel: 793360; *Anna Truelove* 83 Bridge St tel: 245496 (directory).

The email address for any OIRA committee member is [askoira@osneyisland.org.uk](mailto:askoira@osneyisland.org.uk)

## **Next Committee meeting**

The OIRA committee's next meeting is the AGM (see page 1) If you'd like to raise an issue drop in or let someone on the committee know. You can find our agenda the minutes on the Bridge Street notice board and on the website. Next newsletter is due out mid May, last date for copy April 30. If you would like to put an item in contact: Elizabeth Newbery 3 North St. tel: 793360, email: [elizabeth@newberyandengland.com](mailto:elizabeth@newberyandengland.com) or use the tear-of strip below

## **A note on the Internet**

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