

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

www.osneyisland.co.uk
July—August 2015



Big changes to the newsletter

The Directory has become so huge that there is barely any room for news. So, in future we will post the list up on the Osney Island website. For those without internet access, please feel free to call round at 3 North Street for a printout. We'll continue to put new recommendations in the newsletter and update the list on the web at frequent intervals.

COMING UP

Organ recital

Thursday 30 July 2015, 7.30pm, at St Frideswide's church, Organ recital by Tom West. £5 at the door includes a glass of wine and nibbles.

Open Gardens

Sunday, September 12 @ 2pm. *From Anna Truelove:* This year promises to be a cracker! We have 13-14 gardens open with several in Bridge St, (two of which have never been seen before), four in East Street, one in West and one in North streets. Swan, South and Doyley - where are you? There will be Teas on the Towpath and hopefully, plants for sale too. Offers of homemade cakes and plants will be gratefully received (call Maureen on 244480/24 East St if you plan to donate cakes or plants).

Allotments end-of-season event

Sunday, September 27 @ 12.30 on the Twenty Pound Allotments: Allotment holders, their families and friends are invited to an end-of-season celebration on Twenty Pound Meadow. We will provide a vegetable curry, bbq'd sausages, rolls, mustard, ketchup and beer. Please bring a salad and/or a pudding to share, and a plate, cutlery and a glass for your family and guests. There'll be an activity trail for children, and a raffle with AMAZING prizes! We would very grateful for any donations of spare produce, jams/chutneys/preserves and seeds so that we can sell them on the day. All profit will go to the Allotment Association.

Want an allotment?

Rents come due in September and each year some people leave so there are opportunities for others to take their place. It costs £20 a year for a full plot, £10 per half, and £5 for a starter. September is also the time for putting in a seed order through the shop. The seeds are much cheaper than available commercially, and sales contribute to allotment funds. In the summer, the shop is open every Sunday morning at 10 -12 and all Islanders

where you have an allotment or not are welcome to buy garden supplies there.

Skittles

Fancy a game of skittles? Come along to the Democrats Club on East St on Saturday, August 8 @ 8 pm and try your hand at the skittles and bbq event. There will be a raffle and tombola too.

ISLAND NEWS

Osney Island Boat Club

From Simon Stubbings: Anyone wanting to get out on the water to cool down over the next few weeks might be interested to learn that the club has recently acquired a couple of small kayaks. They are built for stability rather than speed and can be easily taken in and out of the water by a person on his or her own. The kayaks are available for use by members of the club who also, of course, have the use of the club's Canadian canoe and existing kayak. The usual booking procedures apply. Enquiries about membership should be directed to Simon Stubbings at simonstubbings@gmail.com

Osney Lock Hydro

The Osney Lock Hydro is the first community owned hydro scheme to be built on the Thames. The hydro uses a reverse Archimedean screw to harness the power of the river to generate electricity. River flows are typically faster during autumn and winter, so the turbine will be primarily generating during these periods, making hydro a good complementary technology to solar, whose peak generation is summer time.

We have an automated system that monitors the flow rates at the local weirs and hydro at Osney Mill, so the hydro will automatically start generating when the flow conditions are right. The roof of the hydro incorporates solar panels, so we are generating electricity all year round, even if the turbine isn't turning.

When planning the project, we used years of historical flow data to enable us to predict the project will generate around 186,000kWh of green electricity a year. The majority of the electricity is sold to the Environment Agency to power their Osney depot, the remainder then goes into grid.

Osney Lock Hydro is owned by our 200 members, almost a half of which live within a mile of the project. As well as generating clean, green electricity, the profits from the sale of the electricity will be used to support

further local environmental projects. We hope to raise over £2 million over the 40 year lifetime of the project.

Now that the generation project is up and running we are developing the wider site as a place for everyone to enjoy. We will be replanting the site with native plants during the autumn planting season, and working with local schools and universities to create educational resources that tell the story of our river. You can help us with the development of this project by taking part in our survey on our website. www.osneylockhydro.org.uk



Above: The new fish pass lets fish freely swim up stream for the first time in 200 years.

Oxford Flood Network

The Oxford Flood Network is setting up a community flood monitoring system by measuring water levels using small wire-less sensors. The first is already in place in North Street. If you'd like further information contact ben@oxfloodnet.co.uk

LOCAL HISTORY

Osney in In 1938

From David Walker: I came to live on Osney Island in 1938 and I recall the businesses that were working at that time. Starting at the top of the island, the licencee of the 'Hollybush' was Fred Timms, a blacksmith from Northmoor. Accommodated in the stables at the West Street end of the yard were the dray horses belonging to the Corona soft drinks company whose depot was on Botley Road. At Christmas time the Shetland ponies used in the pantomime at the New Theatre were also kept there. Coming down West Street, George Taylor, a superintendent in the St John Ambulance Brigade lived at number 57 and it was he who tended the walking wounded with their cuts, stings, sprains, burns, foreign bodies in the eye and other minor complaints. Anything beyond his capabilities would be referred to either Mr Gardener, the local chemist now Woodlands, or to Dr Bailey at 73 Botley Road. Only in an extreme emergency would anyone consider going the casualty department at the Old Radcliffe Infirmary.

Number 24 West Street was a general shop and off-licence owned by Eric and Betty Organ. Betty looked after the shop and Eric was the chef at Pembroke College. Harry Ware and his family lived at 6 Swan Street and their son, Cliff, repaired clocks and watches in the small back bedroom.

The Osney Service Garage stood on the site now occupied by West Court Flats. The garage owned by Mr Baron Money supplied hearses and large Austin limousines to the many undertakers in the district as well as licensed taxis and private hire cars. Baron and his family lived in a detached four bedroom house adjacent to the two garages. In the single extension to 45 West Street, George Venables and George Hudson ran their small dairy business. In Bridge Street Mr 'Smokey' Hammond, resplendent in his spotless white grocer's apron, owned his shop at number 69. His delicious home cured ham and his cut price bags of broken biscuits still remain a happy memory.

Woodward's bakery and shop stood on the opposite side of the street and until Pat and Michael Ferret took over the business, the shop only sold products from the bakery at the back. Mike and Pat turned the shop around and sold everything the local people needed. Deciding to retire, the Ferrets closed the business and the premises were converted to housing. Another smaller grocery shop was at 76 Bridge Street owned by Mrs Walker.

A small hall at number 101 Bridge Street, now Mallinson Court, was the Osney Social Club, the venue for various community activities of the day, such as dances and whist drives. The highlight was a silent film show presented one of the local islanders, 'Son' Pepler. In South Street we had the 'Waterman's', recently renamed the 'Punter', in the capable hands of Arthur and Ivy Mathewson. Leaving Fulham shortly after the outbreak war in 1939 to take over the pub, it remained in the family until the early eighties.

The last shop I remember was the one that Mrs Jenkins ran from the front room of her house at 30 East Street. When open she would sell small items of confectionery and dispense a refreshing drink called Vantas aerated by means of an enormous cylinder of CO2. She did a good trade catering for the many promenaders along the towpath on summer Sunday evenings who watched the numerous swimmers and antics of intrepid youngsters who would dive off Osney Bridge. Like many other things, health and safety regulations put an end to this popular attraction.

Were you there?

From Brian Leahy: I am writing a few words about my childhood living on the fringes of West Oxford in the 1940s. On one occasion, as I walked down Botley Road, I stood on Osney Bridge and looking downriver watched a barge unloading coal for the Arthur Street Power Station. As accuracy is important to me, I would like to be able to put the date, or at least the year, when the Power Station stopped using coal and moved over to oil. Someone did give me the date but I regret that I mislaid it so if anyone could help me I'd be grateful if you would

contact me on 26 Hanney Road, Steventon, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 6AL, email b2m13j10v21@btinternet.com or tel: 01235 831546. Thank you.

Growing up in Osney

Chapter I of a new on-going contribution from John Gaisford:

My journey began at 67 Bridge Street, born the sixth child of William and Hilda Gaisford, one of the biggest families on Frog Island, as it was popularly known then. Early recollections are vague save for moving day when the family moved from No. 67 to No. 26. I clearly recall as a three-year old being moved across to the new house on a bed the day England declared war on Germany in September 1939.

We needed the extra room space at No. 26, for not only did we have our own family to look after, but also lodgers to help mum with expenses for such a hungry breed as the Gaisford family. No. 26 was formerly a public house called the White House I believe, more akin to an ale house, because there was no bar. The ale came from the beer cellar bought up by the landlord to the front of the house where the customers enjoyed their pint. I gather it used to be owned by the former Morrells Brewery and if you look closely you can still a faint name along the concrete strip on the front of the house. There were four bedrooms and one was size of a small dormitory. The kitchen was small but very attractive with an iron range. Next time how we coped in the floods.

IN FOCUS

Following in the footsteps of the excellent West Oxford Academy, this is a new column focussing on Islanders' particular interests and specialisms.

The living image of Shakespeare

From Anna Truelove: Mark Griffiths is a botanist, horticulturist, historian and author.

Mark raised a firestorm when in May 2015, Country Life published his scholarly article – with compelling illustrations – demonstrating that the 'fourth man' on the 1597 title page of John Gerard's Herball is a depiction of William Shakespeare aged 33, with a trim beard and moustache and a full head of hair. This is the first and only known portrayal of Shakespeare that was made in his lifetime and identified as him by the artist. Speaking personally, I think it's a relief to jettison the traditional image of the bald-domed egghead.

John Gerard was an outstanding planstman who, amongst other achievements, worked with William Cecil (Lord Burghley) to create superb gardens at Burghley's town and country residences. His Herball ran to almost 1500 pages and was priced at 25s 7p when it was first published early in 1598 – a whopping sum at the time.

The ornate title page, engraved by William Rogers, features camouflaged portraits of four men: Lord Burghley (in the role of King Solomon); John Gerard himself (in the role of Adam the first gardener and plant-namer); Rembert Dodoens, Flemish botanist and physician and Gerard's main source (in the

role of the great ancient botanist Dioscorides); and William Shakespeare (cast as Apollo, in Classical dress and with laurel wreath). The true identities of these figures are encoded in the plants they hold – chiefly, in Shakespeare's case, the snake's head fritillary, *Fritillaria meleagris*, an allusion to his Venus and Adonis.

Mark's book, 'The Fourth Man' will be published next year. Buy it to learn the full story of his research and the significance of the fritillary. By the way, the initial firestorm has burnt itself out. Having considered Mark's work and his reactions to their objections, eminent scholars are beginning to accept that this is indeed the true face of the Bard.

BITS AND BOBS

Medley Mange Tout pop-up café

In case you haven't heard, there's a great little pop-up café at Medley pick-your-own farm in Binsey Lane. It's open from May - September 9.30 am – 6 pm and serves light lunches, teas, coffee, cold drinks and homemade cakes. It's already very popular so you many need to book for popular times e.g. Saturday lunch. medleymangetout@gmail.com

Need help with odd jobs?

I am currently studying furniture design and make at Ryecotewood. I am able to offer help with odd jobs, basic carpentry, fitted/free standing furniture, shelving, also bike maintenance over summer and beyond in return for donations. Contact Terry on 07848 499791 or email: td2photo@yahoo.com

New newsletter deliverers

From Anna Truelove: Many thanks to those of you who responded to the appeal in the last newsletter to deliver the newsletter. Your help is much appreciated.

Rubbish

Some people are mistaking their lilac bags for food caddies. Inevitably, when rubbish goes out the previous evening, foxes decide to investigate the possibility of a free meal. The result is food strewn all over the pavements. So please put food in the caddies and bring down the handle to the front to lock them.

St Frideswide with Binsey

Regular Services

For times of regular services and other information, please visit our websites at <http://osneybenefice.org.uk/> StF and <http://osneybenefice.org.uk/StM>

Subscriptions

OIRA subscriptions are slowly dribbling in. If you haven't already posted yours through the door or any committee member, please do so as soon as you can. We depend on subscriptions for the production of this newsletter.

New entries for the Directory

Hair dresser: 'I want to recommend for inclusion in the newsletter listings, my excellent and very nice hairdresser, Barry who comes to the house and is very reasonably priced.' T. 01865 400717 / 07860 895364.

USEFUL NUMBERS

City Council, tel: 249811 (now 24 hours); *County Council*, tel: 792422; *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, abandoned bikes, abandoned and unlicensed vehicles*, tel: 101.

OIRA COMMITTEE

Jude Carroll 10 East St, tel: 793247 jude@judecarroll.co.uk (Chair, gazebos, Welcome Pack); *Georg Deutsch* (Secretary) 4 Bridge St, 728050 jan-georg.deutsch@stx.ox.ac.uk; *Maureen Ergeneli* 24 East St; *Suzanne Jeffrey* 13 South St tel: 247737 (notice board); *Bob Lawrence* 42 West St tel: 792358; *Stephen Lynam* (Vice Chair) 11 South St tel: 201334; *Elizabeth Newbery* (Newsletter) 3 North St tel: 793360 elizabeth@newberyandengland.com; *Gareth Strange* 102 Bridge st 727680; *Jula Turner (Treasurer)* 102 Bridge St tel: 07971 88125; *Anna Truelove* 83 Bridge St tel: 245496 (directory, Open Gardens).

Gazebos

If you would like to borrow the gazebos, bunting and tables please contact Jude Carroll 10 East St, tel: 793247.

Welcome Pack

Contact Jude Carroll 10 East St, tel: 793247 jude@judecarroll.co.uk

Webmaster

Tony Roberts is our webmaster. To add content to the Osney Island website please contact the Webmaster at <http://osneyisland.co.uk/contact7-1/webmaster/> entering the text in the 'Message' box. This will be submitted for approval to the committee and published subject to editing. To get in touch with any OIRA committee member use the 'Contact Us' feature on the website.

A note on the Internet

OIRA website: www.osneyisland.co.uk Contributors should be aware that the newsletter is automatically posted on the Internet just as it appears in print. Please bear in mind that OIRA can't accept any responsibility for the contents of external websites.

Osney Island email account

The new email account osneyislandresidents@gmail.com, makes message sharing amongst Island residents simpler and safer. Is it open so that people can sell things, ask for information, give away stuff or provide information.

Notice board

Suzanne Jeffrey, 13 South Street tel: 247737 email: Suzanne@dands.org.uk

Next Committee meeting

The OIRA committee's next meeting is Monday, 3 August @ 8pm in The Punter. 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 **September, last date for copy 30 August 2015**. If you would like to put an item in contact: Elizabeth Newbery 3 North St. tel: 793360, email: elizabeth@newberyandengland.com or use the tear-of strip below.

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Please use this tear-off strip to write down any requests for inclusion in the newsletter or concerns that you may wish Committee Members to raise at OIRA meetings. Post it through the door of any of the members listed above.

Name

Address

Tel. no.

Request