

Osney Island Residents' Association Newsletter

Advent calendar 2021

Last December, for the first time, Osney had a 'living Advent calendar'. Each day of Advent a picture or object was revealed in the window of a house on the island (two houses on some days as the event was so popular). This idea from Debbie Hall was a lovely way for neighbours to communicate and celebrate in the midst of COVID uncertainty and changing lockdown rules.

So what will windows look like this December? If you would like to take part in the 2022 Osney Advent calendar please contact Debbie: debbietheduck@hotmail.com by 15 November and she will assign you a date. We need at least 24 volunteers.

Anyone on the island can participate — you don't need to be a great artist. Photos of last year's windows can be seen at: <https://osneyisland.org.uk/living-advent-calendar-2020/>

Art on Osney show, 6/7 November

Elizabeth Newbery, North Street

Art on Osney exists to raise the profile of artists and craftspeople living on the island and in the surrounding neighbourhoods. On the weekend of 6/7 November, we will be holding our first group selling show in various houses on the island.

All are open Saturday 10–6, Sunday 11–5, unless otherwise indicated.

Elaine Kazimierczuk, 2 North St, paintings.

Elizabeth Newbery, 3 North St, ceramics.

Bob Summers, 69 Bridge St, rushwork and cordage.

Louise Summers, 69 Bridge St, prints, textiles.

Annie Wootton, 69 Bridge St, small paper pulp sculpture.

Joanna Jacobs, 69 Bridge St, works on paper and stitchcraft.

Tara Howard, 37 West St, marbled paper. Sat 2–4, Sun 2–4.

To find out more about Art on Osney please contact Elizabeth Newbery: elizabeth@newberyandengland.com.

Outcomes of the email group

As well as giving away just about everything you can think of, from damsons to wardrobes, members of the Osney email group sometimes post messages asking for help. Here a few of them describe the responses they've received.

My e-mail about a room for my PhD student, Aadhavan, who was coming to the country for the first time from India, had the best possible outcome in a response I received on the very same day. Sally Vinter on West Street had forwarded it to her friend Philippa who happened to have a room to let. Ravi and I went to see Philippa in her beautiful house, just off the Cowley



▲ The Advent picture for 9 December 2020, East Street (photo: Flavia Catena)

Road, and within easy walking distance of the city centre and the Bodleian. She showed us a bright, airy room overlooking her delightful garden and we accepted it on the spot. Aadhavan was welcomed with great warmth and hospitality by Philippa when he arrived, and is happily settled in his new lodgings. (Uttara Natarajan, Bridge Street)

I find the email list always very helpful when I put requests on it. We have a new cleaner thanks to my email a few weeks ago. (Jen Meakin, North Street)

We reached out to the group in search of some household items and were overwhelmed by how generously and enthusiastically people responded. Our neighbours have been so welcoming since our arrival on the island and have offered us everything from kitchen scales to a television. Our cat Treacle was particularly grateful for the offer of some unused cat food. It's lovely to be part of such a supportive and friendly community. (Chloe Fairbanks, Sarah Davies and Treacle, West Street)

We asked for help with loading our car from an upstairs flat. We had a friendly reply from a neighbour, who came on the agreed date and made a dozen trips up and down the stairs on our behalf. The boxes were loaded in less than 15 minutes. He did not accept our offer of cash, but did accept a bottle of red and a bottle of white. I hope he was as happy as he seemed. (Kit Thompson, Bridge Street)

Communities are a source of support with opportunities for ruptures, reparation and growth. Community membership in this constantly shifting,

nomadic world of ours is a rare find and yet bountiful in Osney Island, where it is composed of a diverse group of people, with titles aplenty and at times widely opposing views, yet able to work for the common good.

When searching for singing support for my son a generous choir scholar came to the rescue. Although the audition was never sat, it opened up space to consider formal singing classes. And after an impromptu jam-making spell, I found myself desperately in need of containers. Within the first few minutes of my message going out I had several offers. Six jam jars and lids from six sympathetic individuals. No questions asked, no conditions attached, just sheer helpfulness. My grape jam is cosily tucked in left, right and centre jars. Thank you Osney. (*Gislene Wolfart, Bridge Street*)

Chatty Wednesdays

Eli Harriss, Bridge Street

Back in May 2019, when I was feeling lonely, I started an event for Osney folk to meet in the pub once a month and get to know each other. Inspired by *Fleabag*, it seemed like a nice idea for this community. We held ten of these Chatty Wednesdays before the pandemic hit, and upon request, we've started it up again.

I've made good friends, I've learned more about the island, and even on the last Wednesday in September, the fact that nine islanders turned up to sit outdoors in the cold is testimony to how popular it is. We talked about the best lunches to buy at the Gloucester Green market, drains, recent camping holidays (how to deal with ticks), and we laughed a lot.

My father came to the September chat. His verdict: 'You did a good thing, setting this up.' So come along, meet your neighbours! I intend to hold them from 6 to 8 p.m., before the quiz at The Holly Bush, on the third Wednesday of the month in November and December, COVID-19-willing. Look for Eli in the red hat.

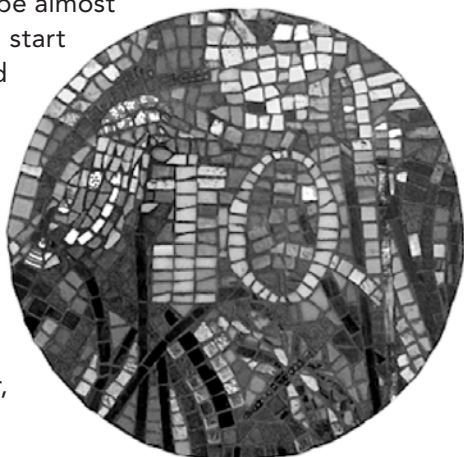
Osney Lock Hydro landscaping project

Barbara Hammond, West Street, CEO Low Carbon Hub

At the hydro, we are finally embarking on the project to landscape the green space between the turbine house and the towpath. Our vision has always been to provide a community space alongside free access to the hydro and it is great finally to be almost there. The work will start

on 3 November and last about a month.

The centrepiece of the project will be a gorgeous human sundial with mosaic marker stones made by local artist Josie Webber, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.



▲ One of the mosaic sundial markers

When we are finished, we will do some trial openings to see how the space is used by the community but also to find out how well the Environment Agency staff and their tenants in the Boat House get on with the new regime. Our ambition is ultimately to have the space open during all daylight hours.

Working life

Two islanders give some insight into their working life.

Beatrice Hitchman, South Street, author and academic

They say everyone has a novel in them. For me, that was true — I was incredibly fortunate that my first book, *Petite Mort*, was published in 2013. What they don't tell you is that there's a thing called 'Second Novel Syndrome', whereby the ignorant bliss surrounding the firstborn falls away into neurosis and panic. *What if it's not as good as the first one? What on earth shall I write about now?* In my case, I managed to string the horror out for a good seven years, and finally published *All of You Every Single One* in August this year; not so much a sequel as a comeback.

Perhaps some of this panic found its way into the novel's setting. In *All of You*, a female couple, Julia and Eve, run away to Vienna in the 1910s, and the book follows their trajectory, family life, trials and tribulations all the way through to the terror of the 1940s and the *Anschluss*. Originally, I'd planned to end Julia and Eve's story far earlier, in the comparatively tranquil 1920s. However — as I now realise — writing the novel through Brexit, and in the close confinement of COVID lockdown, lent the characters an edge of desperation that can't all be attributed to Second Novel Syndrome.

If setting can influence fictional development, though, I'm hopeful that our recent move to Osney will mean something more tranquil happens in Book 3! Perhaps the next plot will simply drift into view, like a barge on a summer evening... I'm looking forward to seeing what island life will bring.

Liliana Resende, Bridge Street, graphic designer, illustrator and motion design artist

I moved to Bridge Street in July, but have been living in the UK for the last 6 years. I love translating ideas into visual stories and bringing characters and concepts to life.

A friend asked me if I could illustrate the cover of his upcoming book, and that was the beginning of my design company. I really enjoyed the process of creating a visual representation of the story that also spoke of the emotion and drama in the book. After that, I opened



my company and have been collaborating in diverse design projects ever since. Visit my website to learn more: <https://lilianaresendesign.com/>

I am also the Senior Communications Officer for an organisation within the University of Oxford Centre for Tropical Medicine.

Why is it called Park End Street?

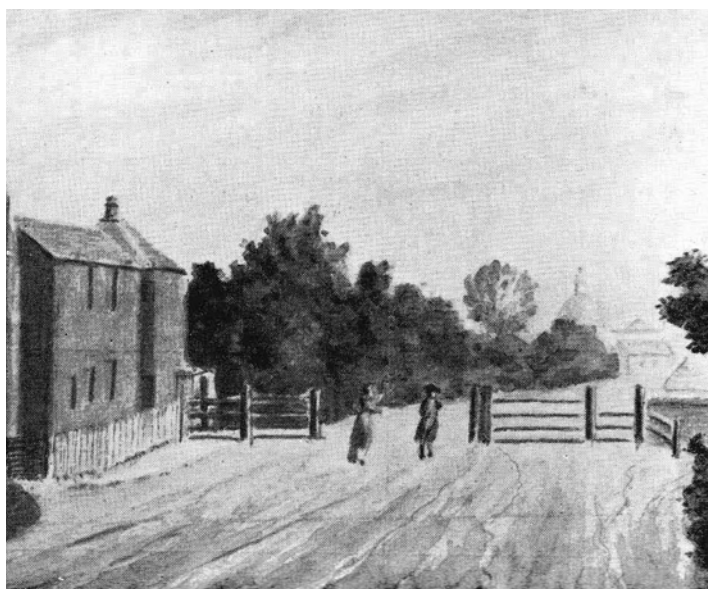
David Walker, South Street

Park End Street gets its name from Parkend, a small town in the Forest of Dean, once rich in iron and coal. The latter came by barge to Oxford's canal wharves where it was unloaded on the site now occupied by Nuffield College and Worcester Street car park. Possibly the only piece of the coal wharves remaining is the stoned-capped brick pillar right beside The Lighthouse pub, by the car park. This pub was formerly The Duke's Cut and, before that, The Queen's Arms. I distinctly remember that the small annexe of the pub jutting out to the Castle Mill Stream was a confectioner's shop.

On the other side of the stream was a branch of the National Cash Register Company, another confectioner called Rodnights, Curtis & Horn Ltd the local agricultural engineers, and Ward's vast furniture showroom. The vacated Office World building was for many years Hartwell's Garage, specialising in Austin motors. It had a large workshop extending into Hythe Bridge Street, a new-car showroom and an off-road filling station with an attendant. A well-known motor cycle dealer, King's, stood next door. The name King's can still be seen in the tiled entrance hall.

Botley turnpike

Gus Fagan, Bridge Street



▲ Turnpike Gate, east of Osney Bridge, 1803, Percy Manning collection, Bodleian Library.

Until the late seventeenth century, all able-bodied men had to contribute so many hours each year (or the monetary equivalent) to road maintenance in England. As traffic increased in size and quantity the Turnpike Trust was introduced to raise the funds for road improvement

and maintenance. A group of notables would form a trust and create a toll gate or turnpike which charged road users.

The Botley Causeway, across the floodplain from the city towards Cumnor Hill, was built in the sixteenth century, but did not become a main route out of Oxford until 1767, when the Swinford Bridge was built.

In November 1766, *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported: 'We are assured that the utmost efforts will be used for immediately obtaining an act to open a great turnpike road from this city westward over the Botley Causeway. It is said that the Earl of Abingdon proposes to build a bridge at his own expense over the Isis at Eynsham Ferry.'

The first turnpike was just east of the river near the present pub (known for over a century as the Old Gate House). This turnpike was in use until 1868, when, probably as a result of the growth of Osney Town, it was moved further west to Binsey Lane. It moved again in 1877 to the foot of Cumnor Hill, following the development of New Botley. In 1880, after an Act of Parliament, it ceased altogether.

Information from *In West Oxford, Historical Notes and Pictures concerning the Parish of St Thomas the Martyr Oxford, 1928.*

Mine's not bigger than yours

In a break with tradition this harvest time, members of the Allotments WhatsApp group have been competing, not for the largest marrow or the tallest leek, but the *smallest* ripe tomato. Louise Summers started the challenge with a photo of a tiny fruit balanced on the tip of her thumbnail. Some minuscule and slender entries soon followed, culminating in one somewhat smaller in diameter than a five-pence coin. But challenger Louise defeated all comers with a late entry of *three* tomatoes on a five-pence piece. As another allotmenter commented, it sounds like a Heston Blumenthal menu item.

West Oxford Academy

Susan Hutchinson, West Street

Sadly, we have been on a COVID-enforced break over the last 18 months but I am cautiously planning a late spring/early summer return. Provisional dates are Tuesday 26 April for 8 weeks.

For this to happen, we need speakers! If you are interested in contributing a talk or would like to suggest a friend or neighbour, please let me know.

West Oxford Academy has been running for over 15 years. Each session lasts only an hour and consists of a 20–30 minute talk by a local resident, followed by questions and informal discussion over a glass of wine. This is a wonderful chance to meet new people and to find out why subjects you know little or nothing about are fascinating for the speaker. Titles of recent talks include:

Surprising crime

Stories of Oxford Castle

Psychedelic drugs: how do they work?

If you would like to find out more, please contact me: westoxfordacademy@gmail.com

St Frideswide's Church

My name is Rachel Cross and I'm the new vicar based at St Frideswide's Church, working with Rev. Clare Sykes in the Osney Team.

In November the church enters a season of remembering, ending with Remembrance Sunday.

This year Advent begins at 5 p.m. on 28 November when we have a carol service and collect unwrapped gifts to be distributed by Home-Start Oxford. A list of recommended gifts will be advertised nearer the time.

We'd love to welcome you to any of our services. In addition to the regular Sunday 8.30 and 10.30 a.m. services (last Sunday of the month the earlier service is 9 a.m. at St Margaret's, Binsey), we have the following:

7 November, 5 p.m. A service to remember those we love who are no longer with us

14 November, 10.30 a.m., Holy Communion with an Act of Remembrance

28 November, 5 p.m. Advent Carol Service (gift collection for Home-Start)

19 December, Carols by Candlelight (3.30 p.m. St Margaret's, Binsey, 5 p.m. St Frideswide's)

24 December, 4.30 p.m. Christmas Crib service

25 December, 9 a.m. St Margaret's Binsey, 10.30 a.m. St Frideswide's

26 December, 10.30 a.m. St Frideswide's

Recipe: Compôte

Anne Andrews, Bridge Street

This recipe was recounted to me by a waiter at a country house hotel in a Cotswold village more than 25 years ago. I eat it for pudding, for breakfast, with porridge, as a snack. Yoghurt, cream, crème fraîche go well with it.

Prunes and dried apricots

A large orange

Soft brown sugar if wished

Cinnamon stick

Eau de vie de prune

Quantities depend on how much of it you need.

Soak the prunes and dried apricots for a few hours in enough water to cover. Put them in a heavy pan with the water and simmer them (30–40 minutes) with a couple of curls of orange peel and half a cinnamon stick. If you want a more syrupy juice, then add some sugar — I usually don't. When the fruit is done to your taste, add the juice of the orange and a slug of the brandy.

Mike Dunmore, 1949–2021

Sadly, Mike Dunmore of Swan Street, who was well known on Osney, died peacefully at home on 24 July this year.

Local issues

Oxpens development consultation

The area between Oxpens Road and the Thames is to be developed into 'an exciting mixed-use neighbourhood for the city' — a huge development of homes, offices, a hotel and 'new public space' (www.oxpensoxford.uk). It will inevitably have a big impact on Osney life. The next public consultation on this project involves exhibitions and drop-in sessions as follows:

11–12 November, Leiden Square, Westgate,
10 a.m.–3 p.m.

11 November, Grandpont Pavilion, Whitehouse Road,
5 p.m.–7 p.m.

13 November, West Oxford Community Centre,
1 p.m.–6 p.m.

Noisy neighbours?

Oxford City Council takes noise pollution seriously. Its website gives advice on what is and is not permissible, and how to deal with noisy neighbours: www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20058/noise_pollution. You can report issues such as such as misfiring car alarms, out-of-hours work on building sites and loud parties using an online form.

OIRA subscriptions

Jula Turner, OIRA Treasurer

A huge 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.

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

Directory of local suppliers

The directory will appear in the next newsletter and is available on the website: osneyisland.org.uk/directory-of-local-suppliers/ There is also a separate list of local shops and services: osneyisland.org.uk/local-shops-and-services/ Please contact Jane Buekett to submit additions or changes.

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

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