



OXFORD PRESERVATION TRUST

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2009

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Photograph: Greg Smolonski

OXFORD OPEN DOORS 2009 – CELEBRATING OXFORD'S PEOPLE AND PLACES

Oxford is a place of layers, from the history beneath our feet, to the beautiful buildings and spaces that people travel the globe to see, as well as the more everyday places of local interest. Yet it is not just the grand, nor indeed even the physical fabric alone that gives Oxford its distinct character. It is also the people and their history – the stories they have to tell, and what those physical places mean to them – that bring the city alive. Add the richness, colour and diversity of Oxford's people to our buildings and places and Oxford Open Doors was always going to succeed.

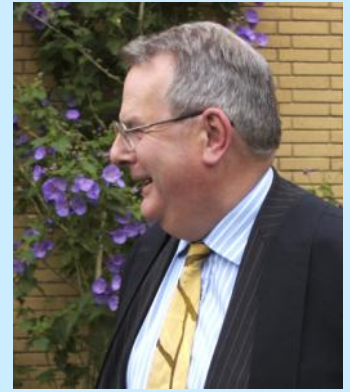
Diversity and colour leap from the pages of the Oxford Open Doors 2009 brochure, in which the colleges and university buildings, with brass bands and picnics, nestle alongside a mosque, churches and synagogue. There is art, literature, music and theatre. Canal boats offer a hidden view of the city and vintage cars record its industrial past. Vintage buses lead to the state-of-the-art bus depot of 21st century Oxford, with its story of reduced emissions and climate change, and owners of Eco-buildings across Oxfordshire share their experiences of environmental innovation. Fun events for children share pages with lectures and walks for the more academic, and the *pièce de résistance* has to be the siting of nine new gargoyles on the 15th century

WELCOME TO THE NEW TRUST CHAIRMAN

We are delighted to welcome Professor Roger Ainsworth as the new Chairman of the Trust. Professor Ainsworth has been a member and strong supporter of the Trust over his many years living in Oxford. He was an Oxford University appointed Trustee between 1989 and 1994, and was a member of the Plans and Executive Committees.

Professor Ainsworth is a mechanical engineer and has written widely on the subject as well as working for Rolls-Royce and the Atomic Energy Research Establishment. He is Master of St Catherine's College, a Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University and an Honorary Fellow of Jesus College. He is currently the Chairman of the University's Buildings and Estates Subcommittee.

Roger is excited about his new role as Chairman of the Trust. He has a commitment to helping break down any perceived barriers between the town and the university and sees both parties as having compatible aims. *'Oxford is a place renowned for its scholarship, history, and character, and I feel we are fortunate to have such a vibrant Trust in this city. The work of the Trust is widely respected, and Oxford should be proud to support it. We are in a unique position to influence Oxford for the better, and I will help in any way I can to ensure our voice is heard.'*



Bodleian Library, the completion of a competition held two years ago inviting young people to design a gargoyle. Those ideas are now turned into beautiful modern stone carvings and an extraordinary opportunity for the winners to see their work in place for future generations to enjoy.

Oxford Open Doors shows what Oxford can achieve by working together. Diverse communities bring vibrancy and opportunities that all go into making Oxford a great place to live.

'It is all about giving people a sense of pride and ownership of their place. People do not talk about coming from Oxford, but from Headington, Summertown, Barton or Blackbird Leys. But this is one city, it belongs to all of us, and it is a city we have plenty to be proud of. Oxford Open Doors is a chance to work together to celebrate Oxford and share what it means to each of us, to understand a little of what it means to others, and to appreciate the part we each play in its present and future.' Debbie Dance, Director

Oxford Open Doors will take place over the weekend of **Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th September**, with some events starting as early as Wednesday 9th September.

Brochures are available throughout the city and online listings are at: www.oxfordopendoors.org.uk. Please note that pre-booking is required for certain events and **booking lines will be open 25th August—11th September, Monday to Friday**. No bookings can be made before this date. All events are free of charge.

Many thanks to our partners at Oxford University for their generous support and backing, and to our wonderful volunteer stewards for their indispensable help on the day.

OXFORD OPEN DOORS OFFICIAL LAUNCH

Oxford Open Doors begins at 10am on Saturday September 12th with the unveiling of nine new gargoyles, designed by local children, on the Bodleian Library. These gargoyles were inspired by the winners of the Millennium Myths & Monsters Design-a-Gargoyle competition, organised by Oxford University and Oxford Preservation Trust in 2007.



Photograph: Damian Halliwell

ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE CASTLE DRAWS THE CROWDS

Following the discovery of stone keep foundations during repair works to the Mound last year, geophysical survey work was undertaken in partnership with Science Oxford and the County Council. Wishing to share these discoveries with a wider audience, the Trust organised an open dig, ending in an Archaeology Open Day on Sunday August 2nd as part of National Archaeology Week.



Over 1000 people climbed the Mound, where staff from the Trust and Oxford Archaeology were on hand, to see the latest discoveries on the

Photograph: Greg Smolonski



shape of the Tower and wall structure. In the Castleyard, visitors brought items for identification by the County Council's Finds Officer, Ashmolean staff shared their work, Science Oxford explained the geology of the area, and children made pots with the Learning and Access Officer at the Key Learning Centre. Talks on the most recent archaeological discoveries across Oxfordshire, together with lots of water and muck for the kids to enjoy, made the whole day a great success.

Photograph: Greg Smolonski

This latest phase of archaeology will now be written up and plans are underway for the Castle Archaeology Open Day to become an annual event in the Trust calendar.

OXFORD CASTLE

We are pleased with the success of Oxford Castle - Unlocked, which is attracting high visitor numbers. With two seasons completed, we commissioned a review of its achievements; this makes interesting and positive reading and offers many suggestions and new ideas on how to take the project forward.

We remind you to take advantage of your **10% discount at Unlocked, the shop and Café 1071.**

The Castle continues to draw local, national and international praise. The Government's new strategy and guidance for improving quality of place, *World Class Places* (May 2009), features a full-page photograph of the Castleyard and Café 1071. Unlocked has also drawn the attention of English Heritage in the Sense of Place publication they are currently preparing, which investigates the role historic environments play in shaping identities and boosting civic participation. In July we were awarded a 'Special Mention' in the international **Premio Gubbio 2009** — Sezione Europea, and in June Oxford Castle - Unlocked was delighted to receive the Four Pillars Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Award at the **Oxfordshire Business Awards 2009.**

The Trust Benefit **Jazz evening** in July was a fun

event in the Castle Gardens with the Oxford Jazz Quintet and guest Joe Stilgoe, thanks to the generosity of Trevor Osborne and Oxford Castle Limited.

LAND NEWS

The green setting of Oxford remains at the heart of the ownership and management of the land owned by the Trust. Public consultation took place this spring on the Environment Agency's **Oxford Flood Relief Management Scheme**, following the floods of 2007. Long term flood relief plans include a suggested major channel that will affect substantial areas of important land within Oxford's setting from the west and cross the Trust's meadows at **North Hinksey** and **Kennington**. Fully aware of the sensitivity of this issue for people within the city, the Trust has been keen to engage from the earliest planning stages and a team of professionals will advise us on the proposals as they progress. It is hoped that early small scale improvements currently taking place to clear ditches and streams will have a positive effect for the houses built in the flood plain on the west side of the city.

Improvements at **Boars Hill** continue to increase access and enjoyment of Trust land. Work is currently underway to integrate the **'Signal Elm'** with our existing land, allowing walkers to include

this within the walk from the Old Berkeley Golf Course. We were delighted when the Signal Elm and the pollard oaks at Chilswell and Abraham Wood were added to the **Woodland Trust national ancient trees database**.

Recent exciting discoveries on Trust land include a bee orchid seen growing on the calcareous grassland in **Kennington Memorial Field**, and at **Marston** corn marigold and camomile, rare arable ‘weeds,’ are beginning to establish themselves in the edges of one field that was recently brought back into arable production. The seeds from these plants can lie dormant for years and it is thought that their disturbance by the plough has made them spring back to life. From now on, we will be managing the field margins to enhance such plants. Evidence of lost elms in field hedges suggests remnants of a medieval field system at this site, and signs of old ridge and furrow cultivation can still be seen on Trust land at Old Marston.

Exciting plans to improve access to the **Heyford Meadows, Sandford on Thames** are underway and we continue to work closely with the executors of the **Lakes at Wolvercote** in the hope that we will soon become the owners of this property. We are engaging in the current City Council review of its countryside services and land ownership, which



Doughnuts at Abraham Wood—Photograph: Eluned Hallas

includes the management of **Shotover** —land given to the City by the Trust in the 1950s for the benefit of the people of Oxford.

Our work with **Volunteer groups** continues to grow and in May the Oxford Conservation Volunteers spent a day working on some ‘water engineering’ at the **Matthew Arnold Reserve**,

digging out drainage channels and constructing a new boardwalk. There is now an all-weather circular walk around the Reserve. At **Abraham Wood**, Boars Hill supporters ensured the new path was clear after this winter’s snows, and the Abingdon Green Gym used coppiced hazel to construct protective ‘doughnuts’ to protect the stumps from hungry deer.



Photograph: Sue Wilberry

GET INVOLVED!

If you are interested in occasional **work parties on Trust land** and would like to become a Trust Land Volunteer please get in touch with Eluned Hallas: e.hallas@oxfordpreservation.org.uk. Our next working groups will be on land at Boars Hill and Sandford-on-Thames.

The Woodland Trust is always interested in knowing about historically significant trees to add to its **national ancient trees database**, so do let us know if you have any suggestions.

Don’t forget to visit Heyford Meadows, the Trust’s riverside land at Sandford-on-Thames, during Oxford Open Doors. A special event will take place on **Sunday 13th September, 2pm-4pm**, offering a chance to explore the wildlife, see the Trust’s ongoing work and enjoy family-friendly activities. In partnership with BBOWT.

PLANNING

The Government has published a new **Planning Policy Statement PPS15** on the Historic Environment for consultation, which appears encouraging at first reading. It came in time for the Independent Examination of Oxford’s **Core Strategy**, the overarching policy document that will set the agenda for the development of Oxford until 2026. The Trust’s statements at the inquiry sought City Council guarantees to references on the historic environment and its setting in the latest version of the Strategy. We have asked for the preparation of a **Heritage Plan**, to be an essential tool in ensuring that heritage plays a positive and integral role in all important planning issues, be it affordable housing or economic development. This

Plan, to which the City has already committed, will be the first of its kind in an historic town in the UK. Other matters raised by the Trust at the hearings included the need for a West End Historic Context Study to guide redevelopment in the area, and issues relating to the Green Belt at Grenoble Road, the Northern Gateway, and in the Cherwell Valley where safeguarded land could be re-designated as Green Belt.

The urban extension to the south of the city for 4000 houses was included in the **South East Plan**, published in May. South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and CPRE have since challenged this proposal as has Oxford University, who own land at Kidlington. The recent draft of the **SODC Core Strategy** included Grenoble Road, and Green Belt development sites at Berinsfield and Wheatley to which we objected. The Trust commented on the **Vale of White Horse District Council Core Strategy**, which covers the western hills commanding the views of Oxford from this approach.

Plans for further work on the analysis of the **Oxford Views** are moving forward as English Heritage (EH) prepares a Brief for Consultants to invite their bids, planned for this autumn. The Trust is an integral part of the team with EH and the City Council.

Conservation Areas are also on the agenda, with the EH publication of *Heritage at Risk: Conservation Areas* which suggests that 1 in 7 conservation areas are at risk from neglect, decay or inappropriate change. In Oxford, many conservation areas lack formal Character Appraisals and the Trust is involved in a joint project with the City Council and EH: the **Measuring Significance Toolkit**. This pilot scheme is being trialled in central Oxford and will roll out nationally. It allows volunteers and local residents with no prior experience to understand and assess their streets, and enables them to assist in Conservation Area Appraisals. A forum of stakeholders/consultants and amenity groups has been set up, and elected Council Members are receiving training. The Trust will work with Oxford Community School to test the toolkit on a younger audience this autumn. The City Council has committed to undertake work to designate Jericho as a conservation area and the Jericho Living Heritage Trust is seeking innovative

ways to put the **Jericho Boatyard** to community use. Close by, the Trust is looking at contributing to the care and improvement of **St Sepulchre's Churchyard**, an important and often forgotten green space.

The **Public Realm and Traffic** are generating much discussion as the County Council has begun its **Transform Oxford** scheme to pedestrianise and improve the city centre. Bus stops were removed from Queen Street in July and short term improvements are taking place in the High Street. We continue to discuss plans for **Broad Street** with the County and the Bodleian Library. The County Council is now preparing its third **Local Transport Plan to 2011**. Public views are sought and you may respond online at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ltpconsultation. The Trust attended the official opening of **Bonn Square** by the Lord Mayor of Oxford and the Burgermeister of Bonn in May, and we are pleased to see the area so well used.

Oxford Brookes plans for redevelopment have attracted attention and the Trust has urged the university to work closely with its neighbours to find a solution to objections over the height and mass of the buildings proposed. **Oxford University and the colleges** continue with various plans and we still await further proposals at the **Radcliffe Infirmary**. Demolitions on the site have opened up



Image: Berman Guedes Stretton

views of the **Radcliffe Observatory** and allowed the imaginations of architects at Berman Guedes Stretton to run wild at a recent exhibition at OVADA. See Oxford Open Doors for access to the Green Templeton College site, including the Observatory, on Sunday 13th September. We were pleased when **Keble College** withdrew their plans for the Acland site, and at **Pembroke College** permission was granted for their expansion plans,



Photograph: Greg Smolonski

ARCHITECTURAL LIGHTING OF THE VICTORIA FOUNTAIN

Guests were treated to a wonderful sight when the architectural lighting by dpa Lighting was switched on to mark the completion of the Victoria Fountain restoration in March. We were pleased to welcome the contractors and our partners from the City Council, East Area Parliament and Magdalen College, together with Oxfordshire County Council and Magdalen College School who kindly hosted the opening party. Over the summer some hanging baskets have appeared and pedestrians crossing the road can see the disc in the pavement explaining the history of the Fountain. We plan to produce a leaflet and remain hopeful that an event to mark May Morning will take place next year.

which we support, except for the car park and electricity sub-station in St Ebbe's Street – a regrettable back yard treatment for a city street site. At **Bartlemas**, an appeal by Oriel College to develop student accommodation was dismissed. We regret the loss of the buildings of **Dorset House, London Road, Headington** which have been demolished, and we have objected to the inclusion of **Elms Parade, Botley** in the Vale of White Horse Core Strategy as a possible site for comprehensive redevelopment, which will compromise the character of this area.

Everyone was taken by surprise when the national **Civic Trust** went into administration and we watch with interest as the National Trust takes forward the Civic Society Initiative and EH takes on Heritage Open Days. We congratulate the **Oxford Civic Society** on their 40th anniversary, and record our thanks to both Edith Gollnast, conservation officer, who has retired from the City Council after more than 40 years, and to Ros Diamond who has left the Planning Advisory Panel after more than 10 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARDS

The 2009 Environmental Awards, sponsored by **Kemp & Kemp Property Consultants**, attracted 26 varied and high



Diana Bell (2008)

quality entries. The Judging Panel has now made its decisions and the results will be announced at the awards evening on **Tuesday 6th October** at the Catholic Chaplaincy, Rose Place, St Aldates, from 5.30 pm. Members welcome.

CURRENT PROJECTS

We are tidying up the base of the **Martyrs Memorial** as part of the public realm improvements in this area, and will include a stone plaque recording the restoration for the Trust's 75th anniversary. An historical study on the **Headington Hill Hall Bridge** has been completed and we are now working with Oxford Brookes on potential restoration work to the structure. At the **LMS Swingbridge**, we have cleared the site of vegetation once again and are in discussion with Chiltern Railways who would like to run a franchise to London which would require changes to the railway bridge close to the scheduled ancient monument.

Railings

Following some early research by Trustee John Ashdown, taken forward by Sarah Billam, City Council conservation officer, a project to aid the replacement of iron railings in the Kingston/Southmoor Roads area of the City is underway, with Lucy's Ironworks and their sister company Sandawana Castings of Witney. The Trust has commissioned a pattern which can be made available to householders to encourage them to reinstate their railings to the correct design. A Railings and Front Gardens leaflet is also being produced.

On Foot in Oxford – Series of Walks Leaflets

A project to update the 1970s series of walks leaflets, *On Foot in Oxford*, is now underway with the financial support of the Trust, following the recent retirement of the original author, Dr Malcolm Graham as Director of the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, and the artist of the original

drawings, Edith Gollnast, who have agreed to give their time to do this. It is hoped that a full set of leaflets can be produced, to include areas which were originally omitted, and to publish them in a book in due course. We are grateful to Oxfordshire County Council for allowing us to use the text and to John Ashdown for his assistance.

TRUST NEWS

We were sad to say goodbye to Gaelle Jolly who left the Trust in March. Gaelle had joined us on a temporary placement whilst studying for a Master's Degree in Cultural Heritage Management at London University and leaves us to return to study for a DPhil at Bath University, having helped with the delivery of the Castle and latterly the Victoria Water Fountain, not to mention sorting out the newsletter along the way. We wish her every success and will be pleased to see her as a volunteer at Oxford Open Doors. Over the spring and summer we are pleased to have the help of Jon Malik, a graduate in Political Science at the University of Chicago. He is joined by our Oxford Open Doors assistants Caitlin Byworth and Francesca Dance.

We are delighted to welcome **Councillor Roy Darke** as City Council appointed Trustee. Councillor Darke has strong connections with Oxford Brookes and a professional knowledge of planning, and will have much to add to the Trust. There have been no other changes with Tom Hassall, Lucy Hughes and Dick Stevens, Ian Scargill and Tim Wilson all agreeing to stand again for a further term.

We are particularly pleased to have agreed to contribute funds from the Trust's **grants** budget to Green Templeton College for their work to restore the remains at Rewley Abbey, and to the

Ashmolean Museum, towards their exciting and advanced redevelopment plans.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The popularity of the Trust continues to increase and its **membership continues to grow**. We have also been delighted to welcome twenty-two Oxford Preservation Trust **Corporate Business Members**, following our launch in March and were pleased to introduce them to our new Chairman in July. We would be delighted to add to our corporate membership; for further details, please contact: h.kilpatrick@oxfordpreservation.org.uk.

We would like to communicate with as many of our members as possible via email so do please **send your email address to us** if you think we do not have it.

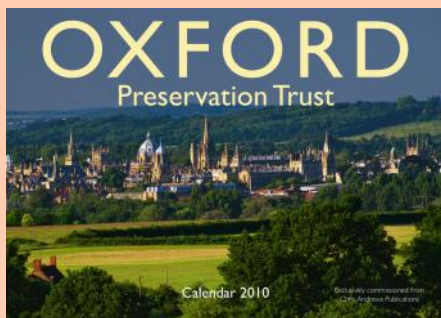
Our **Programme of Events, Walks and Talks** in and around Oxford, continues to be very popular, with such evenings as Dr William Whyte's talk on the making of Victorian Oxford and Dr Malcolm Graham on the history of St Clements and the water fountain. Tours of the Tudor Painted Room and the guided walk around Wytham Woods are now annual events in the calendar, as perhaps the walk led by Professor Philip Stewart will become after the evening strolling across Boars Hill to the Signal Elm, or Dr Steven Parissien's tour of Oxford's Georgian architecture. Trustees continue to make their contribution with John Ashdown leading a tour through Jericho and Professor Malcolm Airs showing members around the newly converted Banbury Road buildings that now house Kellogg College. In August, Dr Ian Scargill led a group around St Edmund Hall where he is a Fellow.

FAREWELL TO SIR DAVID YARDLEY

This summer we have celebrated the contribution that Sir David Yardley has made to the Trust over his twenty years as Chairman, following his decision to retire. The Trustees held a party and commissioned a watercolour by local artist Andrew Walker, of the Martyrs Memorial and the Church of St Mary Magdalen, buildings which are both dear to Sir David. At the AGM, following 'the best tea in Oxford,' Vice Chairman Charles Cooper paid tribute to Sir David's chairmanship and the Trust's achievements during his time. This was followed by Debbie Dance, Director, speaking on "Twenty Years of OPT." Afterwards, members joined Sir David for a glass of wine.

Photograph: Greg Smolonski





First Edition Oxford Preservation Trust Calendar 2010

We are delighted to give you the chance to buy the First Edition of the Oxford Preservation Trust Calendar with photographs by Chris Andrews, leading local photographer, following a year long project taking photographs on Trust land across the city.

The Calendars are available for **£12.95** (plus £2.00 p&p) by sending a cheque to OPT, going online at www.oxfordpreservation.org.uk, or using the booking form enclosed with your newsletter. Numbers are limited so order your calendar today.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 12th & Sunday 13th September

Oxford Open Doors 2009

Venues and activities across the city, with some events from Wednesday 9th www.oxfordopendoors.org.uk

Tuesday 6th October, 6.15 pm

Environmental Awards Ceremony

Catholic Chaplaincy, Rose Place, St Aldates

Refreshments served from 5.30 pm

Members welcome

Tuesday 13th October, 6pm

The Pre-Raphaelites and Oxford

Lecture by Mr Colin Harrison

The Key Learning Centre, Oxford Castle - Unlocked

Cost: £6.00 (members) £10.00 (non-members)

Booking essential

Saturday 16th - Saturday 31st October

Ghost Fest at Oxford Castle - Unlocked

Now in its third year, the festival sets out to uncover the dark secrets that lie within the grounds of Oxford Castle.

Full listings at: www.ghostfest.co.uk

Saturday 24th October - Sunday 1st November,

11am - 4pm

Colour in the Castle - The Big Draw

Giant colour by numbers trail throughout the Prison and children's arts & crafts activities.

Tuesday 3rd November, 10am - 4pm

Exclusive tour of Compton Verney

Led by Dr Steven Parissien, Director

Cost: £38.50 (members only). Booking Essential

Tuesday 10th November, 6pm

Oxford's Village Churches

Lecture by Dr Geoffrey Tyack

The Key Learning Centre, Oxford Castle - Unlocked

£6.00 (members) £10.00 (non-members). Booking essential

December 2009

Christmas at the Castle

Look out for a variety of festive events as the Castle is transformed into Oxford's Winter Wonderland.

www.oxfordcastleunlocked.co.uk

Tuesday 12th January 2010, 6pm

Housing Books 2: Growth and Change at the Bodleian Library

Lecture by Mr John Ashdown

The Key Learning Centre, Oxford Castle - Unlocked

£6.00 (members) £10.00 (non-members). Booking essential

Saturday 6th February 2010, 9.15 am - 3pm

Oxford Views— Past, Present, Future

Day school with Oxford University Department for Continuing Education and OPT.

Booking: Tel 01865 270368 www.contend.ox.ac.uk

Tuesday 16th February 2010, 6pm

The History of West Oxford and Osney

Lecture by Dr Malcolm Graham

The Key Learning Centre, Oxford Castle - Unlocked

£6.00 (members) £10.00 (non-members). Booking essential

Tuesday 23rd March 2010, 6pm

The History of the St Ebbe's Area of Oxford

Lecture by Mr Tom Hassall

The Key Learning Centre, Oxford Castle - Unlocked

£6.00 (members) £10.00 (non-members). Booking essential

TURNER CARDS FOR SALE

We remind members of our postcard of JMW Turner's *View of Oxford From North Hinksey*.

Cards can be purchased in packs of 6 for £5 a pack + p&p (50p for 1-3 pack, £1 for 4 or more).

To order, please write in with the number of packs you require, your address and full payment.

