

A beautiful Secret Gardens Day



Drone photo courtesy of Ryan Warburton

In this edition we will be celebrating 40 years of The Oxton Society with an eight page spread. We have delved into the archives to show how things have changed and reflected on how some things have remained the same. There will be quirky stories, a conversation with the founder and very first chair of the Society and we highlight the achievements of members working together over these 40 years..

We hope this will whet your appetite for more because we will continue the theme of celebrating Oxton's 40 years in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which will be on Wednesday 25th September at the Williamson Art Gallery. Come at 18.15, delve into the archives, publications and history publications for yourself and have a celebratory drink. You will find your invitation together with the papers for the AGM.

**And if you complete the QUIZ on page 12 please bring it with you.
We'll let you have the answers and there will be a prize for the winner.**

Secret Gardens 12 May 2019. A Great Success.

Were you there?

If not you missed a wonderful day out – right in the heart of the Oxton Village Conservation Area.

The sun shone (for which we are very grateful), the gardens were at their very best and the village centre was buzzing. Visitors who did make it certainly found plenty to do. Over 3400 people bought



tickets and many more came to enjoy a day out around the village.

As in the past The Hub, with the Oxton Society Café and the Grand Charity Raffle, was hosted in the gardens of Prenton Prep School. There were queues for the fabulous cakes and people competed to win their favourite prize in the raffle. Mount Pleasant was lined with Arts and Crafts stalls so visitors strolling between gardens could start their Christmas shopping (maybe).



The ever popular Secret Gardens Plant Stall was run by the Friends of the Arno, obviously people who know about plants. It was a stunning success with profits up nearly 50% on last year. Younger visitors were catered for by games organised by The Green Community Shop, a new partnership for this year. Musical entertainment in the village centre was courtesy of Ryan Warburton and showcased Oxton's wonderful musical talent. Ryan also provided some spectacular drone photos, one of which is on the front cover of this newsletter. We are grateful for his contribution to the day.



This year for the first time the village centre hosted an Artisan Makers' Fair. A variety of local producers and makers, organised by Kate Wyness from Greens of Oxtan, gave people the chance to sample their produce. The Makers were amazed by the response from visitors and locals, many running out of food and produce by early afternoon.

The multi coloured awnings stretching along Rose Mount were kindly donated by Granby Street Markets in Liverpool and the extra shade they created were certainly welcomed by a number of the Makers. The hardened marketeers were amazed at the excellent



atmosphere and the number of visitors to the event. Each trader paid a pitch fee which added to the amount raised for this year's good causes.

All these successful activities contributed to the money available to support the Oxtan Society and our partner charities – Birkenhead Youth Club, Terran Morgan Memorial Fund, and Wirral Women and Children's Aid. The total profits to be shared after all the bills have been paid should be over £25,000.

Quotes from the Society's Facebook page :

'Lovely gardens shown to perfection in a lovely village on a lovely day! Thanks to all the gardeners, organisers, musicians, and stallholders'

Lovely day. Great weather, great stalls, fantastic music. Thoroughly enjoyed myself!

Secret Gardens could not happen without a lot of hard work. The organisers would like to thank the army of volunteers who work very hard to make the event a success. The Oxtan Society would also like to thank all the local businesses who supported the event by giving donations and raffle prizes and selling tickets. These include our major sponsors Bogans Carpets and Flooring Superstores, Brennan Ayer O'Neill, The Shrewsbury Arms, and the Jack and Jill Nursery.

Next year will be the 20th Secret Gardens of Oxtan. Planning has already started to make this a memorable occasion. Put the date in your calendar – Sunday 10th May2020.

Trees and Planning

Wirral Borough Council decides all planning applications and applications for tree work. It invites the Society to comment on their impact for the protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area. The **Tree Group** invites all applicants to discuss their proposals not just those where trees are visible from public spaces, as was stated in the last newsletter.

Planning. The Society has been consulted on three applications since the report to the last meeting. These were at :

22 Village Road *LBC/19/00279*

24 Arno Road *APP/19/00382*

55A Christchurch Road *APP/19/00476*.

None raised issues requiring comment.

Trees. The Society has been consulted on fourteen applications for tree work. At the following addresses there were no objections to the proposals :

18 Arno Road *T/19/0101*

22 Rose Mount *CA/19/0099*

8 Templemore Road *CA/19/0103*

37 Village Road *CA/19/0122*

17 Templemore Road *CA/19/0152*

3 Roslin Road *CA/19/0075*.

Comments were made in relation to :

12 Cloughton Firs *T/18/0058*. Permission was granted in 2018 to remove a pollarded Lime tree, covered by a tree preservation order (TPO), and replant with a *Pyrus calleryana* Chanticleer. The tree was felled but no replacement has been planted. The Tree Group has asked Councillor Allan Brame to encourage the Council tree preservation officer to ensure compliance.

36 Shrewsbury Road *T/19/0116*. The proposal for a one third reduction in size of a mature Horse Chestnut, Lime, and Sycamore with a significant presence in the street would be too severe. A more minor crown thinning and lifting would be more appropriate.

29 Templemore Road *CA/19/0124*. Agree with 10-15% crown lifting of a mature Lime, and removal of lower spindly branches.

38 Christchurch Road *CA/19/0157*. Agree with the felling of an Ash and minor reduction of an adjacent Cherry.

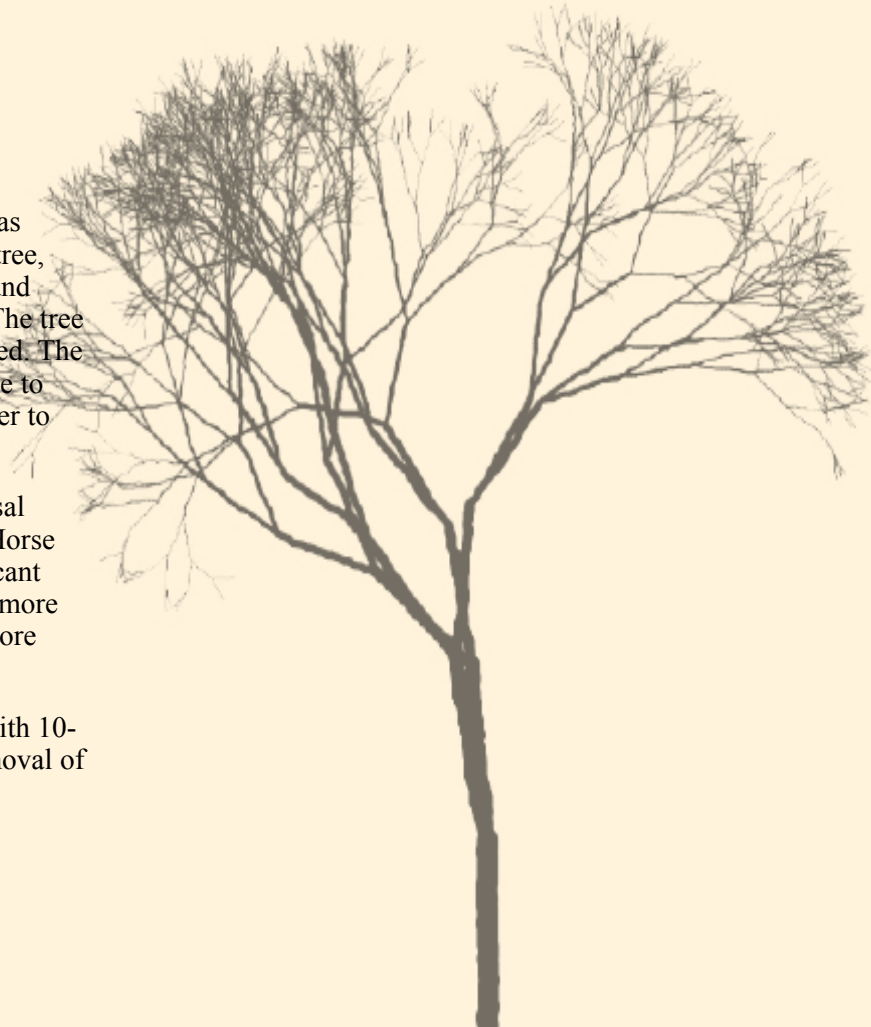
15 Southbank *CA/19/0058*. No objection to the felling of a Larch and the applicant's intention to replant with a possible Oak or Beech would enhance the overall treescape in time. If a member of the Oxtou Society, the applicant could consider applying to the Society's tree fund.

8 Victoria Mount *CA/19/0060*. Reluctantly agree the felling of an old pollarded Sycamore which is clearly visible from Poplar Road and Victoria Mount may be necessary. Would encourage the planting of a replacement tree.

31 Storeton Road *CA/19/0077, CA/19/0079*. Happy with the intention to replace three Cherry trees suffering rot and canker with two native trees of stature, and discussed the benefits of the Society's tree fund to assist.

2 Duncote Close *T/19/0056*. No objection to the felling of an Ash, and reduction in height by 20-25% of another. Would encourage the replanting of a replacement tree.

Full details of all applications are on the Societies website.



40 years ago a seed was planted: Rhiannon Evans, chair of the Oxton Society

We are fortunate that the founder and first Chair of The Oxton Society is still living in Oxton and active on behalf of the Society. David Ainsley was a young architect when he moved with his family to Oxton from Liverpool. I have been talking to David about how the Society started, how things have changed and what lessons can be learned from his experience. As we talked, it became clear that many of the issues are unchanged in the 40 years since the Society was set up.

It started because David had observed a 'gradual erosion of the fabric of the Village': satellite dishes, the loss of elegant Victorian sash windows and the destruction of sandstone walls. He put a notice in the newsagent's and invited people to an informal meeting to discuss his concerns. Only seven or eight people attended that first meeting but subsequently several hundred came to the first public meeting, held at the Williamson Art Gallery, prompted by outrage at a proposed planning application for a public house opposite the Gallery. Following that meeting The Oxton Society was formed, its constitution drawn up and its first committee was elected in 1979. That was the year I came from Brighton and, on the recommendation of friends, chose to live in Oxton although I did not become involved in the Society until I retired, 40 years later.

David and I also talked about the ways the Society has changed and he concluded that 40 years ago the work of the Society was 'simpler': the committee met to consider planning applications each month as that was its prime purpose. Gradually, small scale social events evolved and acquiring the public social space at Price's Lane was a significant achievement but sadly short-lived. I explained that today there are nine working groups seeking to deliver the objectives of the same constitution: History, Planning, Trees, Secret Gardens Task Group, Xmas Lights, Hanging Baskets, Membership & Recruitments, Newsletter, Officers. The Society has grown into a multi-faceted voluntary organisation with one of the largest memberships of any civic society in the country at more than eight times that of the early days. It now works with a large number of other partner charities to deliver its ambitious programmes of Secret Gardens, hanging baskets and Christmas lights. It has won a number of local and national awards over the years. Social media has changed how we communicate with members and we shared the view that there is no substitute for 'face to face' for recruitment of new members.

Finally, David and I discussed how we saw the future of Oxton Village and the Society. The Village centre has changed to reflect new and changing lifestyles, is a vibrant community of businesses and has a bright future with some inspiring new shops. However, the lack of parking remains a significant



barrier to the casual shopper coming into the Village from elsewhere. We considered the significantly higher age profile of the Committee compared to 40 years ago, and the demographic changes which have resulted in people working much later into their 60s and having less time to volunteer. And this led us to conclude that the Society is facing difficult decisions: it needs new members, new Committee members and new co-ordinators for Secret Gardens. David's reminder to the current Committee was very pertinent: 'If because of the changing demographics of Oxton, there are insufficient numbers of volunteers to continue the Society's wonderful range of activities, then the Society will have to reduce its scope of activities. In the end its fundamental role must be to safeguard the fabric of Oxton'.

If the Council, working with the Society, is able to prevent further erosion of Oxton's fine buildings, walls and treescape this will be the best way to make Oxton a more sustainable community of residents and businesses in which everyone can and will want to play an active role.

The Oxton Society over 40 years

In the February 2016 newsletter we published a list of what the Society does for the membership fees you pay and the approximate costs of each activity. We publish this again because it is easy to forget how much more the Society now offers. Below we give a brief timeline of the most important milestones to reach where we are now.

1979 - 1989

- Oxton designated as Conservation area by Wirral Borough Council, The Oxton Society founded and registered as a charity two years later
- Membership fee £1; up to 100 members
- First Oxton Society newsletter
- Prices Lane site: 20 year lease granted to the Society for car park and a boules pitch.
- First Village fête on the site in 1982 (lasting 11 years)
- First edition of *You Are in the Oxton Conservation Area Guide* produced by Wirral Borough Council
- First Christmas Carol and Christmas tree event
- Oxton Traders Association formed
- Annual fête given Victorian theme & transferred to the village centre
- Fundraising events included: Christmas cards/postcards, wine and cheese events, dance and raffles,
- First report on car parking issues in the village

1990 - 1999

- Revised Guide to Living in Conservation areas published and distributed to all properties by The Society
- The Society Notice Board erected in the Village
- Video film made of Oxton: *Portrait of an Urban Village*
- Prices Lane site lease surrendered back to Wirral Borough Council

- First Oxton Village website created and run by a local resident
- Conservation Area signs designed & paid for by the Society and installed at entrance
- Direction signs to the Village
- First Secret Gardens Event. Tickets £1
- Two benches installed in the Village centre and raised beds planted
- First installation of Christmas lights and event paid for by donations and the Society
- First hanging baskets display funded by the Society
- Oxton East & West Walks commenced. Self-guide leaflets produced and sold for £1
- Oxton Society's own website created
- Tree-planting fund initiated
- HSBC bank site: 999 year freehold obtained for The Society
- Guide for Residents revised, published and distributed by the Society
- The Oxton Village Business Association formed
- Celebration of 30 years of the Oxton Society
- First Oxton History walks take place

2000 - 2009

- Christmas lights display in the Village centre converted to LED lights as a contribution to fossil fuel reduction
- Partnerships founded: Friends of the Arno and Oxton Fields, Oxton Cricket and Sports Club, churches
- £326,613 raised by Secret Gardens for 26 local charities (since 2001); 50,000 visitors
- 50th tree planted by The Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside under Oxton's unique tree-planting scheme in collaboration with Port Sunlight Village Trust
- 18 design awards and 3 commendations given
- **Civic Voice, Marsh Civic Award**, *highly commended* for Secret Gardens; one of five Civic Societies to receive the award for its "Outstanding contribution to the Civic Movement"
- **Wirral Tourism Award**, Event of the Year 2013
- **North West in Bloom/RHS award** Winner of *Best Neighbourhood in the North West* award 2016
- **North West in Bloom/RHS awards** Three awards 2018: Gold medal in Best Urban Community class for hanging baskets, Certificate of Special Recognition plus best Newcomer Trophy for Secret Gardens

2010 - 2019

40 years of the Oxton Society Newsletter

40 Years of The Oxton Society Newsletter
The 'Members' Newsletter No. 2' dates from May 1980. No. 1 is missing from the Society's archives but in the unlikely event that anyone — is this at all possible? — still has a copy, the Secretary would be pleased to hear about it.

Newsletter No. 2 looks like the minutes of a meeting and was typed on a borrowed typewriter, generously loaned by Mrs Edna Archard. Its double-sided A4 page sets out the aims of the Society and lists the Committee members with their (landline, of course) telephone numbers.



The Committee was responsible for delivering the newsletters to the members closest to their addresses, with the additional aim of introducing themselves to the membership.

The first 'new-style' newsletter appeared in the July of the same year, A5 in format on lemon-yellow paper and stretched to 7 pages. As it still does today, it listed applications for planning permission

in the Village and the Committee's recommendations on them to the Council. A page was dedicated to the Society's plans to raise enough money to acquire the derelict piece of land then in Price's Lane, the intention being to create a public space for the Village. By September 1982 this was being landscaped and a Village Fete was being organised on the site to raise money for completion of the work.

This and subsequent issues also contained letters from members (for example complaining about dog dirt) and an article in Issue No. 4 remarking on the fact that only 10% of planning applications in the Village came from architects, a figure that one suspects has declined consistently since then. Other concerns at the time were the surreptitious removal and replacement of Yorkshire stone paving slabs, with a recommendation to members to be vigilant and to take photographs if they observed it happening. This would of course not simply have involved whipping your mobile phone camera out of your pocket, but would have required a visit to the chemist to collect the prints a week later!

February 1981's issue contained the results of a survey undertaken by the Society over a 3-hour period in the Village, noting 117 vehicles passing through the Village centre in an hour, of which 6 were large

lorries not obviously delivering to Village shops. This was considered to be a major problem and members were asked for ideas for a solution. It would be interesting to know the result of a similar survey today. Traffic and parking concerns continued to be highlighted in letters from members.

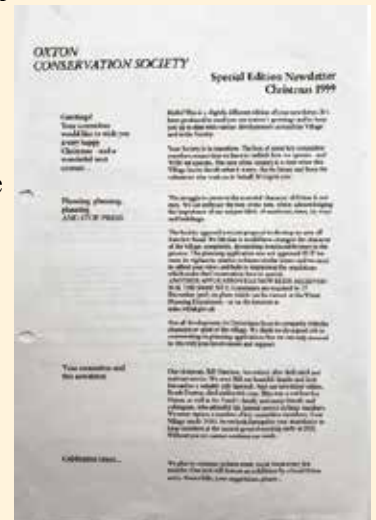
One interesting aspect of some of these early newsletters was the Society's willingness to 'name and shame' property owners whose properties were not maintained to an adequate standard; there was clearly no anxiety about libel action. No. 1 Spring Villas featured in this category in 1981; happily the same criticism no longer applies. But reports were not all negative, as property owners who displayed taste or discretion in the presentation of their buildings also received a mention — an early form of the Society's current Design Award Scheme.

Topical issues crop up in these early newsletters. Issue No. 9 reports on two committee members attempting to travel to York to attend a meeting of the Civic Trust, with which the Society was registered, and ending up taking 7 hours to get there as a result of (then very common) industrial action on the railways.

The front cover of the September 1985 issue promised a more exciting content than previous (or many subsequent) newsletters:

"Drugs, drinking and destruction of a listed building". This referred to the tower of 'Normanston', the listed castellated house near the bottom of Christchurch Road, which had been severely vandalised and frequented by young people who were abusing drugs and alcohol on the premises. Members were encouraged to ring the police if they were not "brave enough to chase them away".

Newsletters became less regular for a period around this time, due to printing costs and lack of revenue, settling eventually to two per year with less emphasis on planning application reports and more on local activities. Word



processing clearly became readily available about then, with a more professional-looking newsletter and even some graphics.

The annual fundraising Fete changed its date in 1986 to May — a precursor to Secret Gardens — and by 1989 was known as the Oxton Victorian Fete. This had variable degrees of financial success over the following years; then, as now, it was heavily dependent on both the weather and the availability of volunteers and on occasions was organised entirely by the local businesses and not by the Society. Christmas Carol gatherings, organised by the Society, started in 1988. Sadly, 1989's 15 ft Christmas tree was stolen from the Village after being in place for only half an hour; similar problems, alas, persist.



1992 saw the arrival of the Society's Notice Board, much speculated on in newsletters from 1990 onwards; it was purchased with financial assistance from the then Midland Bank and located outside its building in the Village Centre where it is still in use today. It is interesting to read the 'new projects' being discussed in 1990, the results of which we take for granted today: the

idea that the boundary of the Conservation is defined by signage, that a leaflet is available (remember, no website then) with guidance on conservation matters and that walks around the Village might prove popular. By 1999 the idea emerged that the Internet or the World Wide Web (still capitalised) might be useful for distributing information to members in the form of an 'electronic notice board' and the following year members' attention was drawn to a new web site (sic) about Oxton Village produced by a local resident, along with the explanation that it is "part of the World Wide Web, which anyone with the right computer equipment can access from anywhere in the world". New editors had also transformed the newsletter visually by printing on the cream paper still used today and in A4 format, albeit still on one double-sided page. The content continued to concentrate on matters of planning and trees.

The Secret Gardens of Oxton was advertised for the first time in the March 2001 newsletter. The plan was to open 6-10 gardens to the public with tickets priced at £3.00 (available only on the day). Most of the proceeds were to go to a scanner appeal for Arrowse Park Hospital, with the remainder to fund

the new venture of putting up Christmas lights in the Village. We learn from the June newsletter that the event attracted 800 visitors and raised £3300 (£1000 for the lights). Donations from Village businesses, from members and from a Barn Dance and Hot Pot Supper at the RAFA Club were expected to make up the difference from the total cost of £4000. There was enthusiastic support for the event to be repeated in the future, as indeed it has been ever since, contributing to the Society's Marsh Civic Award Award in 2011 and winning the Wirral Tourism Awards in 2013. By only its third year it was raising over £14500.

Clearly the lighting fund target was reached, because in December that year Councillor Pat Williams, the Deputy Mayor, performed the switch-on, despite "icy wind and freezing temperatures" and only a few unspecified "minor gremlins" that needed to be sorted out.

Also that year the precursor of our current regular article on Village People appeared with a page on Lord Michael Chan. The novelty of using email to contact members was starting to appear with a promise (long before GDPR) that the Society list would not be passed to third parties. Other 'firsts' were the annual Oxton Art Fair, with its inaugural event in December 2004 and the Oxton Walks first taking place in the summer of the same year. And The Society's own "Brand New Web Site" was reported in the February 2006 newsletter with its associated email address allowing members (and anybody else) to contact the Society directly.

By 2007 the Newsletter had taken on a fresh appearance. This was not an overnight transformation, but it now contained a lot more photographs, more modern graphics and layout and had a more 'chatty' feel to it. It continued, of course to report on the important issues of planning local events and other items of local interest as its main priorities. There were 6 full editions of the 8-page newsletter by that time.

A little bit of Oxton history also started to appear, with articles about the poet Richard Le Gallienne, about Eldon House (then under serious threat of demolition); recollections of Village shops, Oxton in World War II and Lees Tapestry Works. By 2011 this had become a 'History Column' and in June 2011 both the first full History Periodical and the final design of the Newsletter as we see it today appeared, initially with colour on only the front page but within 4 years in its current full-colour glossy format.



The 30th Anniversary of the Society was in 2009, the Chinese Year of the Ox, and it seemed the perfect opportunity for Oxton to acquire its own Ox statue. Three local artists and designers, Mark Wayne Barrett, Louise Jones and Alison Bailey Smith, built the frame for Stan from two recycled doors and wire mesh. He was covered in papier mache and painted with help from local children at the Green Shop.

Stan was unveiled at the Society's 30th Anniversary celebrations in November and was housed for some time in the Williamson Art Gallery, taking part in that year's Oxton Art Fair. He then went on tour, taking up residence in places such as Birkenhead Park Pavilion (where he is pictured here), St Saviours School and the St James Centre.



In 2010 the Society allocated funds to weather proof Stan so that he could be used for future events but sadly it turned out that he was not suitable for fire and weather proofing. Some local residents offered to house Stan and bring him out on relevant occasions, but in the end Stan was returned to one of the artists who made him and Ox Stan, the happy Oxton Ox, is now just a memory!

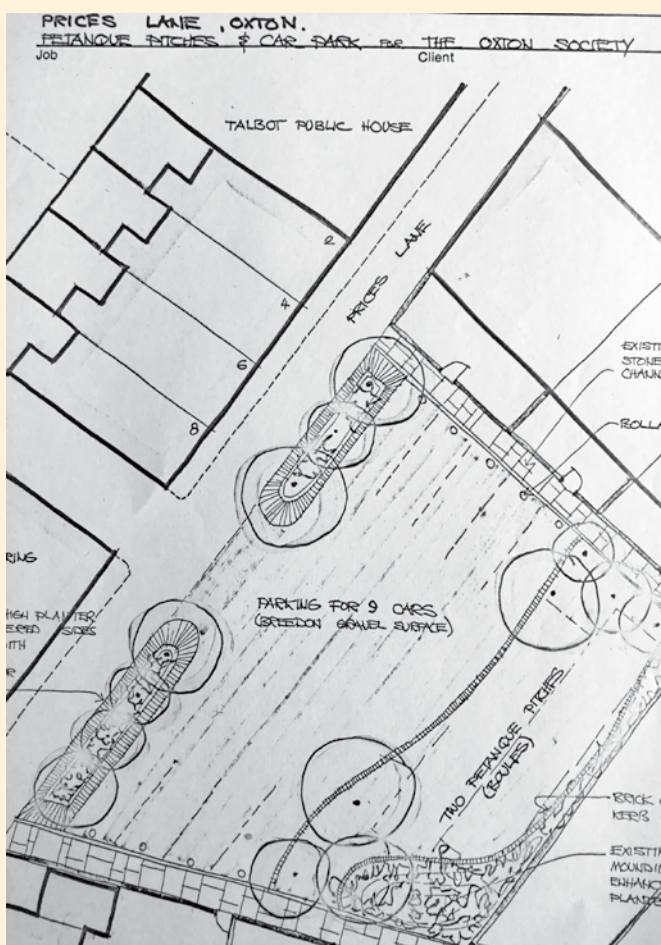


Twenty years ago, in 1999, the Oxton Society was caught up in the big debate caused by the Royal Mail's proposal to change the area's post town to Prenton. There were heated discussions in the Committee meetings, and the Society, along with members and local councillors and even the local M.P, wrote to the Royal Mail protesting that Oxton was not in Prenton!

The Royal Mail wrote back at length, saying that after a full analysis and re-appraisal of the situation they had concluded that to retain Prenton as the 'post town' was the optimum solution to improving the quality of service in the area. However, they did say:

"We are fully aware that many customers feel strongly about using a local name in their address. We are therefore writing to all our customers in the CH43 postcode to emphasise that people living in Oxton, Claughton, Bidston and Noctorum can continue to include these place names in their addresses"

We were thus stuck with living in Oxton, Prenton, but how many of us still put Prenton as part of our address nowadays?



Once the Oxton Society was fully established in 1979, and Conservation Area status had been granted, one of the first initiatives the Society took was to set about reviving what was then the only public space in the village. This was Prices Lane, which was owned by the Local Authority: it was used as a car park for residents and shoppers but had become a derelict eyesore. The Local Authority in 1980 approved a scheme for tidying up the site and landscaping it, to provide residents parking and a site for village functions, and granted a 20 year lease of the land to the Society for a peppercorn rent.

At that time there were job creation programmes which would provide labour for free as long as money could be raised for materials, which would cost £5,000. The Society realised that there was little chance of raising funds for a car park, but there might be funding for a sport related activity. After considerable discussion, the proposal put forward was **Petanque!** Petanque, or Boules, is a French game, similar to bowls but played with steel boules on a hard gravel surface, common in villages throughout France. An area would be developed for regular games, as shown in David Ainsley's plan for the area.

Not everyone was happy about the proposal – the June 1981 Society Newsletter said:

“Some residents are concerned that the playing of Boules on this site will cause a disturbance. We would like to remind members that the Society's main aim is to tidy up this area and provide a pleasant car park. The use of the site for boules will only be occasional.....”

To the Society's pleasure and surprise, with a letter of support from the British Petanque Society, the scheme was approved and the area was surfaced and landscaped. There was an opening ceremony in September 1982, when a fete was held on the area in aid of the landscaping fund. Continuing the French theme, there was a stall selling crepes, as well as a town crier, Morris dancers and a large 'Guess the number of cherries in the cake' competition! The boules pitch was opened by a local actress who was playing a character in a soap opera at the time, along with two locals in Breton sweaters. An inaugural game of boules was played and featured in local newspapers and on local television, but does anyone remember any other games of boules being played there? The Prices Lane site is now in private ownership

Oxton History Quiz compiled by the History Group



1. What was the surname of the husband & wife who, in the 19th century, first established this Public House in Oxton? An extra point if you can give their first names!
2. Many roads in Oxton take their names from an association with the various titles or family connections of the Earls of Shrewsbury. But one of these does not. Which one?
Alton Road Beresford Road Roslin Road



3. **If aid over - war** (anagram — two words). An Oxton thoroughfare is hiding here!
4. What now occupies the site of the house in this *Edwardian* photograph?
5. In Oxton Village there is a date stone on 'Stirling's Wines' shop. What is the year on the stone?
An extra point if you can give the full quotation!



Earl of Shrewsbury

6. The Coat of Arms of the Earls of Shrewsbury is seen here supported on either side by a large dog! What was the name of its (now extinct) breed?
7. What year did Fraiche restaurant win the accolade of No 1 restaurant in the UK?
8. In which year was Oxton formerly incorporated into the newly formed Borough of Birkenhead, thus losing its right to self-manage its own affairs?
1847 1877 1901
9. In which year was The Arno's Rose Garden officially opened as a Public Park?
10. Running behind The Queen's Arms is a narrow lane known as a shippen. What is a shippen?
11. What was the popular name of Newburns Lane in the 19th and early 20th century ?
12. The Devaney Medical Centre opened in 1881. Who or what was Devaney ?
13. This long-gone pillar box in Oxton stood at the junction of which two roads?
14. What was the name of the church demolished in 1970 situated at the junction of Sandy way and Shrewsbury Road?
15. If you had lived in Oxton in the late 19th century, your address might have included the name of a tree. For example: **Birch Road, Poplar Rod, Claughton Firs** and **Palm Hill** – but there was one other then. What was its name ?



Two new Blue Plaques celebrate Oxton Composer

This June the Oxton Society unveiled the third in its series of Blue Plaques to celebrate the many people of Oxton who have achieved fame over the years. This most recent unveiling of two plaques celebrated the life of composer Cyril Scott. One plaque (sponsored by the property owners) is now on the house at No.1 Rich View where he was born in 1879 and the other (sponsored by the Society) on the house at 11 Village Road where he lived with his parents until around 1896.

Cyril Scott's music is relatively infrequently played nowadays but his name was well established as a pianist and composer from the early years until at least the middle of the 20th century. The recent article in the Oxton Society History Periodical in May 2019 provided a short biography of his musical and literary life and, in conjunction with the Blue Plaques, the Society has published a booklet, written by Graham McLean and Gillian Ingram, outlining his life and work in more detail.



The Society was extremely pleased to have two musical celebrities to unveil the plaques. Vasily Petrenko, the Chief Conductor of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, unveiled the Village Road plaque in the presence of the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress

of Wirral on 15th June. Mr Petrenko expressed his pleasure at being able to commemorate the work of a local composer and Councillor Allan Brame commended the Society and in particular the History Group for their fine work in recording our heritage and celebrating the people who have shaped our community.

On the following day, the Georgian-born concert pianist Nino Gvetadze, who has recently recorded the piano works of Cyril Scott, unveiled the Rich View plaque.



The Cyril Scott weekend continued with two further celebrations of the composer. Firstly, a painted window by the late artist David Hillhouse was dedicated at Birkenhead Priory. The window contains a portrait of Cyril Scott alongside a representation of one of his compositions, the Guitar Sonata, written for Andrés Segovia in 1927. This was followed by a concert by the Liverpool Guitar Society in which they played an arrangement for four guitars by Richard Harding of the Scott Sonata. Finally, the Williamson Art Gallery Summer Serenade piano recital by Richard Casey that weekend also

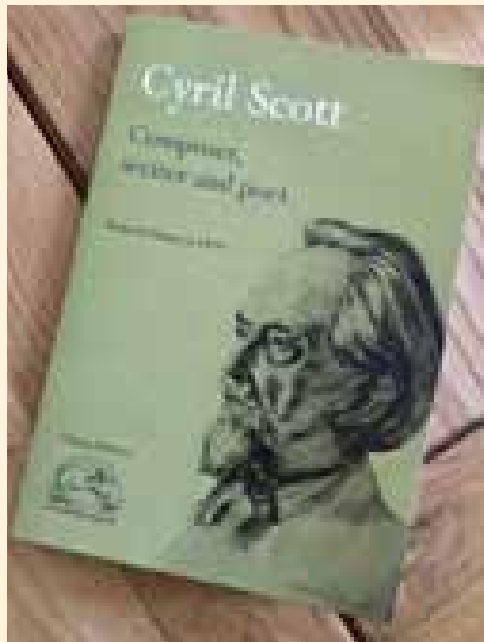
contained several pieces by Cyril Scott and his friends and contemporaries Percy Grainger and Roger Quilter.

The events were attended by one of Cyril Scott's relatives, Jill Mann, who was able to provide additional information on the family at the time they lived in Oxton. Cyril Scott's son Desmond, who lives in Canada, has expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Society and the Williamson Art Gallery and Priory Museum. He wrote: "many thanks for your outstanding work on behalf of Cyril, arranging the celebration, the musical performances, and the painted window. We are very grateful."

More information about Cyril Scott's life, writings and music can be found on the website cyrilscott.net and in the Oxton Society's new booklet on the composer, obtainable from Oxton Books at the Williamson Art Gallery at a cost of £3.

More international artists celebrate Cyril Scott

The Society was very pleased when the Georgian-born pianist Nino Gvetadze contacted us to ask if she could contribute to the Cyril Scott weekend. Nino has recently recorded a CD of Cyril Scott's solo piano music and has been an enthusiast of Scott's music for many years. She flew in from Amsterdam where she lives and was accompanied by Valentine Laout, the Artistic Director of Challenge Records, who will be issuing the recording this autumn and has previously issued recordings of Scott's music. We were particularly grateful too that Ms Gvetadze agreed to unveil the plaque on Scott's birthplace at 1 Rich View and attend the other musical events that weekend. The Society wishes Nino, Valentine and Challenge Records every success with their new recording.



Local What's on

Williamson Art Gallery and Museum.

Open Wednesday to Sunday 10am – 5pm. Fully accessible, café.

The Williamson offers a range of courses and events. The details of these and the programme of exhibitions can be viewed at williamsonartgallery.org

Exhibitions include :

Distinctly – in association with Look Biennial 2019. Britain through the eyes of ten leading photographers. September 27th – November 24th.

Nikki Parmenter – a Cheshire based artist who investigates myth and legend and the visual symbols which represent what is important to societies. October 5th – December 22nd.

Oxton Art Fair.

Private preview, Friday November 29th 6 – 8pm. Fair days, Saturday 30th November and Sunday 1st December.

Oxton History Walks in September

The stories of events in the village and people from its history told entertainingly by an Oxton Society Guide on organised walks in September.

East 21st, West 18th, Arno 14th and Williamson 22nd.

To book please ring Oxton Village Books 0151 652 0202



**Xmas Lights switch-on,
Sat, Nov 30th**

Planning is well advanced for this year's switch-on All the usual attractions, including

Celebrity switch-on, Mike Carr has agreed to throw the switch at 4.30pm

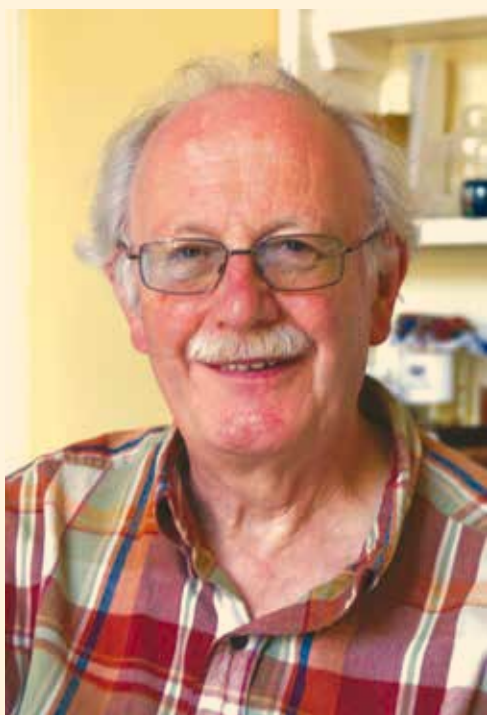
Carols and choirs
Mince Pies, Mulled Wine and Hot Dogs
Children's entertainment
Xmas Raffle and photo opps
Father Christmas

We also hope to have a Xmas Market with all sorts of Xmas Gifts (open from 1.00pm)

Oxton's White Xmas - we are working on further additions to the lights, possibly lighting up the trees. Fund-raising could start in October. Buy a bulb for £2.

Volunteers needed There are hundreds of jobs to do in advance and on the day. The existing group is stretched to its limit. Please, if you can spare a couple of hours, get in touch with Marie Pennington on 652 2068 or text 07960133301, or email mariejpennington@sky.com

Peter Urquhart 1934 - 2019.



Peter Urquhart who died on 6th June was born in Liverpool in 1934, and moved to Oxtton in 1966. After National Service he read History at Cambridge and qualified as a solicitor in 1960.

He was generous, compassionate, and engaged, professionally and socially.

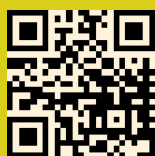
From the outset of his career he wanted to ensure everyone had access to the law. He set up the Citizens Advice Bureau in Toxteth and chaired the legal services group nationally. He was the first solicitor on the Lord Chancellor's Legal Aid Advisory Committee, and the first legal member of the Equal Opportunities Commission.

From 1984 he focused on legal aid work, specialising in family law and adoptions. In 1992 he was appointed as a District Judge and helped make Liverpool a centre of good practice in the field of adoptions. He retired in 2001 but continued his interests through committee membership of organisations such as Raise Liverpool, a charity providing welfare benefit, debt, and money management advice, and Plus Dane Housing Association.

He had a lifelong interest in music, art, and books. He sang in the Renaissance Music Group Choir from 1967 and had a season ticket for the Philharmonic where he sponsored a trombonist. The breadth of his cultural interest is illustrated by the fact that he also had a season ticket for Tranmere Rovers!

Tributes paid to him emphasised his insatiable interest in people and his ability to find common ground with just about everyone. He was a champion of local activities, gave advice to the Oxtton Society, took a keen interest in the life of the village and helped put the bookshop, Oxtton Books, on a firm footing.

His was a full life well lived and he will be missed by his wife Caro, his children Nathaniel and Jessica, and anyone who knew him.



Keeping in touch - some of our contact details have changed

Facebook - no changes, search for the Oxtton Society

Twitter - no changes, @oxtonsociety2

website has changed to www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk

General enquiries - info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk

Membership - membership@theoxtonsociety.co.uk

History - history@theoxtonsociety.co.uk

Secret Gardens - secretgardens@theoxtonsociety.co.uk

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome and should be sent to the Editor by email to info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk or by post to the Secretary, 4 Willan Street, CH43 5ST.

Do you have an email address? If you are not receiving e-mails with news updates, your current email address is not in the database. *Please send it to:*
membership@theoxtonsociety.co.uk