

the

OXTON SOCIETY



IN this newsletter we intended to give you an update on plans for our award winning and 20th Secret Gardens, our triple gold medal winning hanging baskets and the four guided history walks. We intended to introduce the new logo, beautifully designed by Phill Jenkins which makes more explicit the twin themes of the Society: *conservation and community*. And we intended to write about much else that we were planning. We also expected that Steve and Sue Ferguson would collect the newsletters and history periodicals as usual from Impressions, our local printer, and bundle them up, as they have done for more than 25 years, and pass them on to the 20 distributors who would pop them through our letter boxes. But this is not possible this time because of Covid 19. So this will be our first online newsletter. And we owe our thanks to the editors, who have worked so hard to make it happen at all.

A week ago the Prime Minister has declared a state of emergency and we are living for three weeks, at least, with unprecedented restrictions on our personal freedoms. We are extremely sad that many businesses in the village have had to close for the time being. But what shines out from this is the importance of COMMUNITY at its multiple levels and layers. Greens, Edwards and Sterling Wines are doing their best to keep open and to deliver food to vulnerable households and we are enormously grateful to all the teams involved. Some of the restaurants, Sabrosa and Riverhill, are trying to diversify and are hoping to deliver take-away meals.



Home Watch groups have turned themselves into online WhatsApp support networks that are looking after their immediate neighbours: shopping, picking up prescriptions, dog-walking, sharing websites and information, humour and keeping positive.

Many doctors, nurses, health professionals and other key workers live in our community working in many different contexts and under enormous strain. Heartfelt thanks go to them all and I know we are all doing our bit to minimise unessential social contact.

Yet despite the anxiety and fears that we have, there are unprecedented opportunities for keeping in touch through technology and social media. The Oxtion Society has its role too in the way it can support its community of members and businesses. There are over 800 members who can keep in touch through our website, Facebook and Twitter. There are only 173 members registered on the Members Facebook site; so now is the time to join and share your experience or pick up ideas for shopping and deliveries from the village and wider community. We can keep in touch and put each other in touch with what is out there to help us get through this unprecedented period. We, the members of the committee, will continue to work behind the scenes, updating the website, Facebook and Twitter sites.

Finally, as a community of garden owners, maybe as we have our daily walk or run, we will enjoy more than ever peeking over the garden walls to catch glimpses of Oxtion's beautiful gardens.

Rhiannon Evans, Chair

HELPING OXTON : SELF-SUPPORT MOVEMENT TO COPE WITH THE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN

IN the days before the Government issued the clampdown on all non-essential movement, a team of volunteers was putting plans in place to provide support for Oxtan residents. It began with #ViralKindness cards in village shops so people could volunteer to help any self-isolating neighbours. Then leaflets were delivered door-to-door explaining how people could get involved. A new WhatsApp group was set up, providing frequent updates on the latest information and enabling people to offer or ask for help.

We were just in time. The framework was in place just before everyone was told to stay at home. The worry remains that some vulnerable residents may not realise what help is available or how to access it as we now have to rely on WhatsApp, Facebook or email to spread the message.

Volunteers have come forward, willing to do essential shopping; collect vital medicine; post letters; or just to make phone calls so people stuck at home can hear a friendly voice. A small collection of basic food supplies has been established, in case stockpiling leaves supermarket shelves bare.



We are clearly in for the long haul and needs may change as the weeks go by. We are looking for more volunteers – some of the first to come forward are now themselves self-isolating. We are looking for donations of items for our food collection. Perhaps more importantly, we are looking for details of any residents who may be alone or vulnerable: if you have concerns about an elderly neighbour, can you check if they are in need of anything – and let us know, if they are.

No one knows how the coming weeks of lockdown will affect us. Amidst all the anxiety about this national crisis, it is heartening to see the growing sense of community and concern for each other, in Oxtan as everywhere else. So many people are already extending a helping hand to relatives, friends and strangers.

But please be assured that there is a team of willing volunteers you can call upon if needed. Please do not be too proud to ask for help.

The co-ordinators of the scheme are Lucy, Bev, Sarah and myself. To contact us – whether to offer help or to ask for it – you can email helpingoxton@gmail.com or text 07905 487797

Councillor Allan Brame

CORONAVIRUS **PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS**

Wirral InfoBank

Wirral Council has launched an on-line resource to help you find support services near you, simply by entering your postcode.

Go to www.wirralinfobank.co.uk

Coronavirus Oxtan Support

The Oxtan WhatsApp group offers information and support. Text 07905 487797 to join.

Some Oxtan streets have set up their own little WhatsApp groups. You could ask your neighbours whether there is one - or if not, consider setting one up yourself.

WHILE many businesses in Oxton village have been forced to close because of the coronavirus, those that can open have been going above and beyond to help local residents.

Greens of Oxton has been offering free home deliveries for pensioners and housebound people as well as a special service for the village's NHS staff. Owner Kate Wyness said: "Local NHS staff can pre-order their essential items and they'll be ready to collect the next day.

"They just need to email the day before. If they have difficulty in collecting, then we will try to come to an arrangement.

"For the elderly we have been putting orders together for them to either collect or have delivered.

"I've been keeping an eye on my regulars too and if they don't come in I've been checking on them to see if they're ok."

If you would like to make an order simply email greensofoxtonorders@gmail.com by 2pm the day before. The shop will only open between 8am and 3pm to allow staff to complete deliveries. Kate and her team have also opened a hatch at the side of the shop in Rose Mount to help with social distancing.

"The hatch is so people don't have to come inside the shop if they don't want to," said Kate. "It's also ideal if you just want to buy a few bits like milk, eggs or a pie.

"We're taking every precaution we can to keep everyone safe and only allowing one customer in the shop at a time."



Edwards Post Office and Bon Bakery have also been offering free delivery for local residents. Kirsten Edwards who runs the businesses with her husband Paul, said: "We're asking people to phone us with their order and pay by card. We have been taking items off the shelf while people are on the phone to make sure we have got what they need.

"We've been making up to 10 home deliveries a day and I can tell residents are really grateful for the service. Some people don't want to come to the door but we've been knocking to let them know their delivery is outside as we don't want to leave fresh or frozen goods unattended.

"It's been very busy so we've just been asking for a minimum order of £5 but the delivery is free.

"The Post Office also has a Drop & Go service for people who post a few parcels but don't want to wait in the queue. They can sign up and put money on an account and just drop off their parcels and we'll sort the rest. This helps with social distancing.

"Unfortunately, a lot of shops are not built to accommodate people being two metres apart but we've stuck hazard tape to the floor to help customers keep their distance. Staff are also using gloves and hand sanitising gel at all times."

Please call Edwards on 0151 652 1495.

There is no self-service in Bon Bakery but customers can make their order at the shop door and it will be made up for you.

Sabrosa is offering a take-away service 5-9 pm plus a 25 per cent discount for NHS staff. Call 0151 652 1555 or email bookings@sabrosaoxton.co.uk

Sterling Wines are open 9am-8pm and can deliver locally 652 9726

Homebrew Oxton are open noon-7pm and will deliver locally. www.homebrewbottleshop.com

UPDATE ON THE TRANMERE MURAL



FOLLOWING an investigation into the mural that was created at the side of Home in Oxtan village, Wirral Borough Council were satisfied that it fell within the definition of an advertisement set out at section 336 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Letters were sent to the owner of the land and to the Tranmere Rovers Trust (who commissioned the mural) advising that the unauthorised display of an advertisement constitutes an offence and that they should either permanently remove it or apply for retrospective advertisement consent.

The owner of the property contacted the council to confirm that they intended to alter the image so that it is a replica of the Birkenhead Coat of Arms rather than a TRFC emblem.

The council ruled that the Birkenhead Coat of Arms could not reasonably be described as an advertisement and the painting of the building would therefore be permitted development under Part 2, Class C of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Therefore, the council would not require the image to be removed.

The owner was afforded a period of 14 days to make the amendments to the image on March 9.

However, the artist who originally carried out the work and who will make the alterations is no longer able to do so in light of the current coronavirus.

Therefore, the matter will be put on hold until such time that the current situation changes. As soon as that is the case, the alterations must be made immediately.

A CUT ABOVE THE REST

A LOCAL hairdressers has proved it's a cut above the rest after been named as one of Merseyside's finest salons. The Liverpool Echo asked its readers to tell them about their favourite hairdressers and they were inundated with hundreds of responses. And coming in at an impressive No 6 was Oxtan village's Christine Lesley.

One customer, Colette Hughes Simmons, said: "Christine Lesley from Oxtan... been following her from salon to salon for a long time. Goes out of her way for clients and staff. Listens to what you want and gives great advice. Have a great laugh every time I go which adds to the whole experience.

"Looked after me when I was poorly and my hair began to fall out, no stress just gave me a style and products to get me through."

Christine said: "We were surprised and delighted to be nominated by our customers and being named in the top ten was amazing."



EDITH SMITH EXHIBITION

THERE is more recognition for Edith Smith, the first female warranted police officer, born and bred in Oxtan. Grantham Museum, in the town where Edith later walked the beat, is planning an exhibition about her.



The museum fund-raising director said: "Thanks to the generous donations of the Grantham public, our team has designed and is now putting together an exhibition fitting of Edith Smith."

ST SAVIOUR'S CHURCH AND THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

*“For the Church of the 21st century, good ecology is not an optional extra but a matter of justice. It is therefore central to what it means to be a Christian”
Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury-2012*

ST SAVIOUR'S, a 2* listed parish church, sits in the north-west corner of the Oxton Conservation Area, its diverse congregation forming part of the wider community. For all of us the climate emergency has temporarily been pushed into second place by the global Covid-19 outbreak, which makes it even more important that we continue planning for the climate emergency because it needs energetic and coordinated local engagement.

Going fossil free is now the key responsibility of all church congregations. The Church of England has committed itself to achieving this by 2035 to avoid global catastrophe and uphold the beauty of God's creation; At St Saviour's we are in the process of mobilising our congregation for the challenge of freeing ourselves from our dependence on carbon fuel; this is now quite literally costing the earth. St Saviour already purchases all its electricity from renewable sources through the Parish Buying Energy Basket, but still has a gas fired heating system.



Putting heat into buildings like St Saviour is a recent phenomenon which developed with the arrival of cheap coal. Before this buildings were managed to keep people comfortable without burning fuel. This approach was based on an understanding of how people's bodies respond to the temperature and properties of materials around them. Heavy masonry buildings like churches would use wall hangings in winter to insulate the occupants from the cold masonry. In older churches box pews created draft-free micro environments which protected people. Sitting on warm woollen cushions made it relatively easy to keep warm. In monastic buildings the monks' warm woollen habits with cowls were able to conserve their body heat so they could remain comfortable during long services.

We are learning to avoid thinking about heating the air inside a church and to concentrate instead on keeping the people in the building comfortable. We have recently had a demonstration of electrically heated pew cushions which work well. The issue is changing our habits and expectations, heavily ingrained in us, from that relatively short period of cheap but damaging energy.

The climate emergency requires coordinated community action if we are to develop and implement ways of becoming carbon neutral locally. Many communities are already doing this. St Saviour's extensive south facing roofs could generate electricity through solar panels, currently not possible in the conservation area, and a good example of issues that need to be addressed. This community action could begin by sharing initiatives that already exist, and through this exploring ways that we could make Oxton an eco-community.

The following websites contain a wealth of helpful information;

operationnoah.org; ecochurch.arochoa.org.uk;
climatestewards.org,

Peter Gommon, co-chair of St Saviour's Fabric Committee

FEEDBACK ON THE NEWSLETTER SURVEY

THANK you to everyone who took the time to fill in the online survey about the Oxtun Society's newsletter and social media channels.

A total of 180 people responded, providing valuable feedback about current and future content.

It was encouraging to learn that almost 97 per cent said they regularly read the newsletter and information about upcoming events, articles about local architecture and what's on listings were the three most popular sections.

Asked about what future content residents would be interested in, the top three suggestions were news about local businesses, updates on planning issues in the conservation area and features about local wildlife and gardens.

Several members also said they would like to learn more about the interesting people who had lived in specific houses in the village in the past.

The newsletter is delivered to members' homes every quarter, but several respondents said they would prefer to read it online. In fact, the newsletter is published on the website, where previous editions can also be accessed.

There was a mixed reaction to questions about the society's website, Facebook and Twitter pages depending on whether respondents used social media or not.

However, most of those who did welcomed the launch of the new private, members-only Facebook group following the closure of the previous site.

The results of the survey and the feedback provided will help shape future decisions.

To read the full survey outcome report go to the Oxtun Society website and follow 'About' - 'Publications' - 'Newsletter'.

**Only residents who have provided an email address could access the survey.*

UPDATE ON THE DEFIBRILLATOR FOR OXTON

MANY villages and small communities now have defibrillators which are accessed 24 hours a day and require a minimum amount of training. Undoubtedly, defibrillators save lives.

Since the chemist in the village has closed concern has been expressed by residents and businesses that there is no emergency first aid in the Village. The 2019 AGM gave the Committee the go ahead to fundraise and take advice on the most appropriate Automated External Defibrillator (AED).



A small group of local doctors and medics have helped the Society move this forward and we are delighted to report the following

- a successful application was made to the *Wirral Together Fund* for £500 and we are very grateful to WBC for this
- a very generous anonymous donation of £500 has been received
- a further £300 in donations has been received
- the Society will contribute £250
- the Society has agreed to fund ongoing costs.

Some further small donations would be appreciated to help us reach our target of £1,590 plus installation and other costs. Please contact us on info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk if you would like to contribute.

At the moment the exact location cannot be finalised due to Covid19 and restrictions on all our movements but we will update you as soon as there is more information.

TREES AND PLANNING

Planning

The Society has been consulted on one new application since the last report.

53 Christchurch Road (Former Rowland's Pharmacy) APP/19/01409: Change of use of ground floor from retail (use class A1) to a hot food takeaway (use class A5) with the installation of an external flue.

The Society raised three issues:

- The submitted Heritage Statement was wholly inadequate and the application should have been held invalid until a new statement in compliance with Council guidance had been submitted;

- The lack of information or drawings in the application relating to potential changes to the design of the shop front, which it seemed would be necessary from the limited description of the works proposed

- The Council's policy in Supplementary Planning Document 3 (Hot Food Takeaways, Restaurants, Cafes, requires that new developments of this type should be at least 40 meters away from the front elevation of a residential property. This proposal would be closer than this to the nearest residential property in Christchurch Road

The Society was subsequently advised that as alterations to the shop front would be required the current application was not valid and a new application and consultation process was necessary.

The case officer also confirmed that the proposal would be in conflict with the criterion in SPD3 and this would be a significant consideration in determining the application.

There is an update on the following application

6 Palm Hill APP/19/01563: Retrospective application for partial demolition of sandstone wall

The Society's response to this application was set out in the last report. We were then notified that the application was refused and that the applicant was advised that 1 metre of the original 1.6 metre wall must be rebuilt. The applicant has subsequently launched an appeal against the decision.

Trees.

The Society has been consulted on eight applications for tree work since the last report. At the following addresses there were no objections to the proposals:

7 Talbot Road CA/20/0002

63 Birch Road/16 Croft Edge CA/20/0010

10 Duncote Close CA/20/0015

Roslin Court CA/20/0018

18 Birch Road CA/19/0020

42 Poplar Road CA/20/0027

The Society made comments in relation to:

36 Glenmore Road CA/20/0004 Proposals to re-pollard a cherry in the back garden, fell a Norway spruce and a Scots pine in the rear garden and fell a Rowan in the front garden undermining a party wall. No objections were raised to the work in the rear garden, but the Tree Group commented that it would be a shame to lose the Rowan, a small but well shaped mature tree, which did not appear to be doing major damage to the wall. The Group suggested the Tree Officer assess and advise. If the tree is removed the applicants could approach the Oxtown Society Tree Fund to support a replacement on opposite side of the front garden.



28 Arno Road CA/20/0036 Proposal to fell a Horse Chestnut with increasing splits in the bark and loss of branches since previous application in 2018. This tree is the first in a line of trees covered by TPOs. A previous application to fell was rejected by the council tree officer on the grounds that disease progression may be slow and recovery was possible. In view of the apparent deterioration we would appreciate the expert advice of the tree officer and/or a qualified tree surgeon to determine if there is now significant disease requiring felling. If the disease is spreading, we would not object in principle to the loss of this tree as there is another better-looking specimen tree within the front garden of the property which may flourish if the diseased tree is removed.

Full details of all applications and comments are available on 'Planning' & 'Conservation' sections of the Society's website.

Lou McGrath



OXTON resident Lou McGrath likes nothing better than pottering around his garden in Cearns Road and shopping in the village. However, his day job was a far cry from the tranquillity of Wirral. This unassuming 67-year-old has helped save thousands of lives around the world and has numerous honours bestowed upon him.

Born in Dovecot to parents Mary – now 101 and living in an Oxton nursing home – and Dennis, who died in 1987, Lou moved to Westbank Road, Birkenhead when he was 10. He moved to Oxton in the 1980s when he met his wife, Beverley.

But it was a decision Lou and his brother, Rae, made in 1989 that changed the course of their lives. Having both served in the Army, they decided to set up the Mines Advisory Group to highlight people's suffering in regions that had been blighted by war.

As well as the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, Lou received an OBE in 1998 and an Honorary Fellowship from Liverpool John Moores



Why did you set up MAG?

The experiences you get in the Army, you can't always bring into civilian life. When Rae and I left the Army and heard that refugees were turning back from Pakistan into Afghanistan following the Russian withdrawal in the 1980s, we knew we had to do something.

We didn't plan to actually carry out landmine clearance because we thought the UN would do that, but we were wrong.

How did you directly help these countries?

In many countries there was a lack of expertise in how to deal with landmines. The threats were in agricultural areas and, being poor, everything people did from ploughing fields to taking children to school became a threat to life. We knew we had to train people in order that the population could continue everyday life.

The first clearance was in 1992 after the first Gulf War when Kurdish people in northern Iraq had their villages, water sources and agricultural land deliberately mined by Saddam Hussein's troops. Then we set up de-mining operations in Cambodia which had not only been bombed during the Vietnam War, but had had landmines laid by the Khmer Rouge. It remains the most contaminated country in the world.

How did your work develop?

After setting up MAG, we met with other organisations and founded the International Campaign to Ban Landmines which then led to the Ottawa Treaty. Today, 180 countries have agreed to stop producing, exporting or using anti-personnel landmines.

The Treaty was signed in December 1997 – sadly a few months after the death of Princess Diana who had come on board with our work. She made a speech to the Royal Geographical Society and many people became positive about banning landmines. At the height of our clearance work we had 7,000 people working with us around the world.

Left: With Princess Diana at her maiden speech on landmines, June 1997.

You retired as director of MAG in 2011, what do you do now?

I don't follow football but I met Sir Bobby Charlton in Cambodia in 2016 bringing sport equipment over and was horrified by how many amputees he saw. He set up the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation to provide support for victims of conflict and he asked if I would help him. Now my work is more focussed on the victims. For example, in Jordan we fund a centre to help people who have been physically or mentally affected.

Our latest challenge is the coronavirus. We have projects in Cambodia and Jordan with Syrian refugees and we're trying to ensure that we don't lose any continuity in our work and people are safe.

The most dangerous situation you've been in?

You might think clearance activities, but the biggest threats were from armed groups or drunken soldiers.

In the 90s Saddam Hussein issued a summary execution order for both myself and Rae and offered a reward because of our support of the Kurdish population and our vocal exposure of the deliberate laying of landmines against the civilian population.

What is your proudest achievement?

Training women to be bomb disposal experts. I discovered early on that most people in bomb disposal were men – the family breadwinners – so it was down to women to provide food and shelter for their children.

It was unpopular at the time, but I began training women in Cambodia. They usually have better manual dexterity and their concentration lasts longer so I believed they were ideal candidates to be trained. I got a lot of ridicule but was determined to do it. Today, all over the world, women are bomb disposal experts, even in the military.

What have you learned about yourself over the years?

If you're leading a lot of people and control an organisation, the responsibility can be enormous and you have to learn to develop confidence in other people. I never realised I had the skills to do this and to be able to bring the best out of people.

You have been awarded many honours, do any stand out?

The Nobel Peace Prize was shared amongst seven of us for our work on the ICBL. We brought thousands of people together from all over world and it was the first time society had brought about an international treaty. The ICBL continues to pressurise governments and hold them responsible for their actions.

Who do you admire most?

The dedicated people who are in the most dangerous situations in places of conflict such as doctors and nurses. I also admire the journalists and photographers who, despite the dangers they put themselves in, do it because they believe in what they're doing and their commitment and dedication is beyond reproach.



At the UN Landmine Treaty Conference, Dec 2019

What is your earliest memory?

Ironically, as a child I spent lot of time on bomb sites and in air raid shelters. Even when we moved to Westbank Road there was a bomb site.

People would be surprised to know this about me

Like most people I like the simple things in life such as pottering about in the garden. I'm an avid reader and I like art and walking in the countryside.

What do you like best about living in Oxtan?

I like the village itself. It's got that life in it and is a centre for all of the houses here. I like the trees and I like the quirkiness of Oxtan people. There are a lot of characters and some very interesting people. I like to support the businesses in the village. We lack a butchers and I hope the Oxtan Society pushes for one as it would create another reason for people to come to the village.



Tree planting in February

OUR team of volunteers met on Oxtun Fields on the left hand side of Duck Pond Lane, armed with gloves wellies and spades to plant 150 trees in a very boggy area.

The trees were supplied by Wirral Council and were required to be planted as soon as possible.

We got to work, digging the hole, planting, staking, then covering the base with protective mesh that was then stapled to the stake. The trees needed to be positioned in an area suitable for their needs in the wettest places to soak up excess water, which they love.

Two hours later and extremely muddy all the trees were in. Looking across the field they could easily be mistaken for meerkats standing on guard. A job well done then back to The Shed for a well deserved cuppa.

We had a stall at the History and Heritage Fair at Birkenhead Town Hall which was well attended and we enjoyed chatting to people about what we do to look after The Arno and Oxtun Fields.



SUPPORT IS GROWING FOR PLANTING TREES

TREE protection and tree planting have never been more important and residents of the Oxtun Conservation Area can be proud that they have been ahead of the trend. The aesthetic value of trees in urban areas has been long appreciated but is now seen to be important in the battle against the climate crisis.



Proud owners of a Ginkgo planted last February. The children wanted the tree in their garden when they learned that the Ginkgo was the dominant tree at the time of the dinosaurs!

For the past 12 years the Oxtun Society has used its Tree Planting Fund to plant 64 trees. They have all been planted at the request of members on their land and all are visible from public places. The sourcing of trees and their planting is free of charge and the principal obligation for owners is to water the trees throughout March to October of the first year.

There are three easily recognisable locations to view some of the trees. There are four on the frontage of Jack & Jill Day Nursery and Pre-School on Shrewsbury Road. Four are in the Shrewsbury Arms car park and two are at Christ Church along Bessborough Road.

The Society welcomes interest from its members for planting within the Conservation Area. They should contact the Society as soon as possible, but no later than the end of November, so there can be time for an on-site discussion. The planting season is in January and into early February. Details of the scheme and a list of some 20 trees can be found on the Society's website

MORE PROTECTION FOR OXTON'S BOUNDARY WALLS



THE distinctive sandstone boundary walls and stone gate pillars, present throughout the Conservation Area, are what gives it much of its character. In some parts it is the original red brick walls of the Edwardian era which are of equal importance.

The Council's planning officers have recently drawn our attention to a High Court ruling in 2017 which clarifies the protection given to walls in conservation areas. This had the effect of extending planning controls over the demolition of walls. It applies to all existing walls over 1 metre high.

The new ruling means that within a Conservation Area any demolition of a wall over 1 metre in height, in whole or in part, regardless of the extent, requires planning permission.

Up until this ruling the demolition of part of a wall not exceeding 50 per cent of the total was considered to be an "alteration" not requiring permission.

When deciding whether or not permission should be granted the planning officers will have regard to the Council's policies in the Local Plan and its related guidance documents, and in the Oxtton Conservation Management Plan.



More information on these policies can be found on the Society's website together with the Society's Advice Note on Gates, Fences and Walls.

If in doubt about whether or not any work you are planning on boundary walls requires permission the Society's advice is always to contact the Council's planning department before starting.

Ashton House boundary wall

The imposing sandstone boundary wall surrounding the NHS Ashton House site is one of the most important in the Conservation Area, both visually and historically. The Oxtton Society has been lobbying the NHS Trust for many years for a programme of repair and restoration.

When the Trust announced that the majority of the site was to be sold for development the Society rapidly commissioned a report from a local stonemason on the heritage significance of the wall and requirements for its sympathetic repair and maintenance. This was made available to the Trust and we were encouraged when repair work started. However, this has now ceased and the long term future of the wall is now in the hands of the new owners.

The Society's main concerns are to ensure that a maintenance programme is made a condition of any future development and that any proposal to demolish a section of wall to create a new vehicular access would be resisted by the Council.

NEW FACES

WE are delighted to welcome two new members to the Oxton Society Committee.



John Heathman

I moved to Oxton 20 years ago with my wife Kate and our three children. Over those years, we have all made good friends and enjoyed everything that Oxton has to offer.

I like to get involved so I took up the job of running the Christmas Lights and switch on event for 12 years and I also help in the planning and running of Secret Gardens. I am a Chartered Engineer and worked in the electricity utilities industry for 30 years, however I've taken a break from full time work now and hope to be able to use my time more for the benefit of the local area. You will see me around walking the dogs, early mornings and sometimes in the pub later on... I am keen to see that Oxton can protect its special character, while embracing modern life.

Carla Walker

I moved to Oxton seven years ago with my husband Simon. We were house hunting around Wirral and happened to be viewing properties in Oxton on the day of the Secret Gardens. Needless to say we fell in love with the village – who wouldn't!

Oxton is a great, quirky place to live and I love its character and eclectic mix of houses. The people are friendly and there is a great community spirit. Plus, everything you need is on your doorstep – from shopping to hairdressers to great bars and restaurants.

My background is in journalism so I'm delighted to be helping the Oxton Society with the newsletter and with publicity for future events and initiatives.

After getting involved I've realised just how much time and effort goes into looking after this wonderful conservation area by Society members, businesses and volunteers and I look forward to 'doing my bit' for the village.



Contacting us

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.

You can also contact the Society about any other matter using the above addresses, or via the Oxton Society website at www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk

Do you have an email address? If you are not receiving emails from us with news updates, your current email address is not in the database, so please let us have it. Your details are confidential and will never be passed to third parties.

Newsletter editors - Carla Walker & Carolyn Weber