

the

OXTON SOCIETY

free to members



Oxton Christmas Lights

Preparations are well under way for this year's Oxton Christmas Lights Switch-on – but this year it will be held on a Sunday.

Wirral's mayor Councillor Jeff Green will be guest of honour between 3.30pm and 6pm on Sunday, November 27.

Rose Mount and the village centre will again host an array of festive stalls and entertainments and the area will be closed off to traffic, allowing everyone to spread out and enjoy what's on offer.

Highlights include:

- Father Christmas and his assistant Elves
- The Salvation Army Band, which will be leading the carol singing
- A children's carousel

- A lucky dip with festive gifts
- Several performances from choirs including the Rock Choir, Woodchurch Road Primary School and St Josephs Primary School
- Several businesses hosting stalls in the street selling warm, tasty food including speciality hot chocolates (from Host), Indian snacks, hot-dogs and others. The Society will have its normal mulled wine and



mince pie stalls

- A Christmas raffle with great prizes donated from the local shops, restaurants and businesses. Tickets will go on sale this week as well as on the day.

We have had to switch the event to a Sunday this year to accommodate our lights technician who is needed elsewhere on the Saturday, but it will still be a great occasion for villagers to enjoy.

Some of the money raised at the lights switch-on goes towards paying for the event, but the Society also

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AGM

Rhiannon Evans chaired her last Oxtan Society AGM on Wednesday, September 28 before retiring after 12 years in the hot seat.

The meeting, held at St Saviour's Parish Centre, was well attended and generated some interesting discussions amongst members.

After welcoming visitors, Rhiannon presented the Annual Report and outlined the Society's achievements over the previous 12 months.

The Society has raised more than £400,000 over the last 12 years, mainly through the Secret Gardens, and this has been distributed to local charities in the Wirral area. Rhiannon commented that this is a particular achievement that every member of the Society should feel proud about.

After a report from the Treasurer, which was approved, the matter of appointing the committee members of the society was addressed.

Firstly, Chris Jarrey was proposed and approved as the new chair, and the following were approved to serve on the committee: Vice-Chair – Jeff Willis, Treasurer – Griff Round, Secretary – John Heathman.

Committee members Alan Chape, George Harrison, Carla Walker, Dave Barden, John Field, John Booth, Steve Weber, Bob Knowles, Heather Alcock and Dominic Wilkinson were voted on to serve for another year.

The committee also has Councillor Allan Brame, Annette Capper (Friends of The Arno), and Don

Firth-Wilkinson acting as co-opted members.

These committee members carry out various duties, for example, providing comments back to Wirral Council on planning applications and tree cutting applications, managing our membership, liaising with the businesses and also in planning the various projects that the society promotes.

If any members are unsure who is on the committee, the Oxtan Society website is to be updated with all their details and areas of responsibility. Visit theoxtonsociety.co.uk

Members then enjoyed a series of Design Award presentations to residents and business owners who have carried out restoration works in the conservation area to a high level of quality, maintaining or enhancing the heritage look of the village.

Those receiving awards were Paul Edwards of Edwards News for the shop frontage refurbishment; Deb and Adam Stevenson with Heather and David Alcock for sandstone wall restoration and to Amanda and Nim Subhedar for their brick wall re-build.

Outstanding Contribution awards



Edwards News shop frontage refurbishment

were also made to members of the Society who have or are providing and delivering much-needed work for the Society and the community.

These went to Jay Little and Lesley McGarrity, for their roles as leaders of the Secret Gardens organising committee (prior to Covid), and also to Moira Young for managing the History Archive at her bookshop in the Williamson Art Gallery and bringing information, knowledge and her enthusiasm to the History Group.

The AGM finished with a look at the future of the Society's focus and activities.

Once the meeting was completed, a presentation was made by Alan Chape to Rhiannon Evans to thank her for her commitment and leadership over the last 12 years. The Society wishes Rhiannon a happy and well-deserved retirement.



Sandstone wall restoration by Deb and Adam Stevenson with Heather and David Alcock



Brick wall by Amanda and Nim Subhedar

Oxton welcomes two new business owners to the village

Twenty Sixteen Coffee & Kitchen

If you wondered what inspired the name of the new eatery in Village Road, it's the year the owners' daughter, Isla, was born.

Chris and Helen Jones, who moved to Oxton in 2014, always wanted to open their own cafe and when the former Fit Grill came up for sale they jumped at the chance.

Chris, a chef of 23 years who has worked alongside celebrity chefs as well as in hotel kitchens like The Pullman in Liverpool, said: "During Covid I re-evaluated my work/life balance as I'd been working 60 hours a week and hardly saw my daughter. I decided the time was right to do something about it.

"We wanted to create a family-friendly, dog-friendly, warm, welcoming café where people can come to relax and have a coffee and a cake, a light bite or a full meal, whatever they fancy."

Helen, who works for Merseyrail and featured in a recent Oxton Society Newsletter after having her first children's book published, said: "We're delighted to have invested in the community we care so much about. We've created 10 new jobs and our team have been brilliant.

"We have something for everyone, including a vegan menu, a children's menu and our cakes from Belinda at The Cookery Nook are really popular."

Chris added: "In the future, we will be expanding the



business to host private functions of an evening; such as baby showers, birthdays, family meals, wedding breakfasts etc with bespoke menus created for each event. This will provide our customers with the opportunity to have the entire venue to themselves to celebrate their special occasion."

Twenty Sixteen Coffee & Kitchen is open seven days a week for breakfast, brunch, lunch or an early dinner.



Liverno

After a 24-year career in the hospitality industry working on cruise ships and 5★ restaurants in his native Istanbul in Turkey, Ahmet Yildirim is delighted to have finally bought his own business – Liverno in Christchurch Road.

The 40-year-old moved to Liverpool three years ago and worked as a restaurant consultant before taking over Oxton's Italian-style eatery when it was put up for sale this summer.

Ahmet said: "I specialise in front of house and my friend Aytac is a fantastic chef and our dream was to manage our own restaurant.

"Oxton is a lovely village and Liverno was perfect for us. We changed the menu slightly and have had some really positive feedback from customers. Everything is homemade, using the best ingredients, and it's going really well."

Liverno opens 4pm to 9.30pm Tuesday to Sunday. It doesn't have an alcohol licence at present so diners can bring their own drinks, and pre bookings are advised on Fridays and Saturdays.

Ahmet added: "We have lots of ideas for the future. At present we are keen to offer takeaway deliveries and are looking for reliable drivers, so if anyone is interested please contact us."

Oxton People - Chris Jarrey

Tell us a bit about yourself...

I come from a military family which moved to a new country or town every two to three years so as a child I lived all over the UK and Europe.

For many years I owned an antique restoration business in Winchester but decided to have a change of direction and took a degree in Fine Art Valuation as a mature student and have since worked as a valuer and auctioneer. For the last 11 years I have worked for Bonhams covering the north west.

I live in Arno Road and have restored a derelict Georgian town house there. Prior to this I lived in Claughton Firs in a Regency three-story terraced house.

I have my own radio programme every Wednesday evening on a Birkenhead community radio station called Vintage Radio.

When and why did you join the Oxton Society?

We moved to Oxton 10 years ago from Malvern. Oxton reminded us of Malvern in many ways with similar buildings, walls and trees and a nice community feel. Patrick Toosey came to our house and told us about the Oxton Society on a recruitment drive. He really endeared himself to us and we were blown away by his enthusiasm for the village so we signed on the dotted line!

What interested you about becoming chair of the Society?

Oxton Christmas lights continued makes donations to the Mayor's chosen charities and the Salvation Army, which provides much-needed support to families at Christmas.

So please come into the village



I wanted to contribute to the Oxton Society but didn't have a great deal of spare time during the day so thought the chairman post would

allow me to be constructively involved without the sort of specialist skills needed for other roles.

What do like best about the village?

I love the way it has evolved over time without losing its essence and history.

What improvements would you like to see?

I would love to see more younger people involved in the Society so we can ensure the achievements made so far can be continued long into the future and new ideas and aspirations can give fresh impetus for all the residents of the village. It's a special place because of its unique architectural mix but most of all because of the people who live in it and nurture it.



centre and celebrate the beginning of the Christmas festival on Sunday, November 27.

As always, as much help as possible is needed to run events like this. If you can spare an hour or so of your

time to help set up gazebos and then take them down afterwards, please text Dave Pennington on 07960 133301 and offer your services.

Please don't think someone else can do this – we really need YOU!



The Secret Gardens 2023

The 2023 Secret Gardens of Oxton will be held on Sunday, May 14 and it promises to be another spectacular occasion.

Preparations are already under way with organisers liaising with volunteers and local charities over the logistics and one of the most important components of the day is, of course, the gardens themselves – large or small.

Organiser Kirsty Cotton said: “Secret Gardens is a great family day out for a variety of reasons but people mostly visit because they love looking around the gardens.

“This year we welcomed a few people who hadn’t shown their gardens before – and the feedback was tremendous. We’d love to see more newcomers in 2023 to complement the regular garden owners who open up every year.”

If you haven't shown your garden before and are unsure what's involved, here are the thoughts of a couple of recent garden owners:

Phillipa Boston, who lives in Victoria Mount, said: “We were persuaded to take part in early 2011 by Steve Ferguson, who was a member of the Oxton Society, although we really didn't know what the garden would look like by the time we were due to open in May!

“There is quite a bit of work to do to



get the garden ready but to be perfectly honest, we plan to get more done than we actually do! It's more a case of regular maintenance and then probably a mad few days prior, just to tidy up and fill any spaces!

“On the day itself we're up early, hoping for sunshine and setting up chairs so we can sit with a cuppa and chat to all the visitors as they arrive. We are allocated volunteer marshalls to help us, and we quickly brief them on the garden and the best way for everyone to make their way through. We have a couple of plants that are always asked about so we make sure they have the answers! It always feels like a slow start but once people arrive, it's a steady stream throughout the rest of the day

sometimes there's a queue of people waiting patiently to come in.

“It's always been a positive event, everyone is complementary. I really appreciate the serious gardeners answering my questions as I'm very much an amateur. It's a lovely way to meet our neighbours plus it's been interesting to see how far people travel to visit us, we've had visitors



from all over the UK.

“What I would say is that it doesn't matter the size of garden, people are interested and very much appreciate every person/family/couple that opens up their space.

“The only downside is that it's a long day and can be quite tiring but the positives far outweigh the negatives.

“To anyone thinking of opening their garden I'd say just do it! Don't worry about your garden being different from others you have seen. No garden is unsuitable or unwanted.”

Lisa Stafford, who has opened her garden in Rose Mount in the past and is now a chief organiser alongside Kirsty Cotton, said: “I have opened my garden because I am proud of it and really enjoy the occasion.

“It involves quite a lot of work, as an overhaul is needed, but being there all day (which is optional because volunteers can help out) and being ready to welcome people and interact with them and answer questions is very exciting.

“Being part of the day, enjoying making your garden look good, and seeing other people enjoy it too is really worth it.

“It is very rewarding to see others enjoy your efforts and I get great pleasure from participating in such a lovely event.”

If you would like to showcase your garden in 2023 or require any more information, email secretgardens@theoxtonsociety.co.uk



Meet the Friends of the Arno Monday Club

Ever since the Friends group was formed in 2007 our volunteer gardeners have met up each Monday morning from 10am–noon to tackle jobs around The Arno.

Initially we had no base and brought our own tools but with talent and effort from members, and a successful bid for funding from Wirral Borough Council, we now have our own gardeners' shed and tools. We are also able to make a hot drink and there is always a slice of homemade cake to keep us going.

Recently, our group has gained in strength and we have all made new



friends. It is pleasant to meet on a Monday morning and have a chat while we do the weeding, clearing ivy, pruning, potting up or planting out; whatever we feel we can do.

Visitors to The Arno love to stop and chat, ask us about the history of the park or the planting. So, if you would like to join us or just say hello, you will be made very welcome.

One of our recent achievements has been the rediscovery and excavation of the old Quarry Steps (seen here with our volunteer John Fairclough who worked tirelessly on the project).

The earliest photographic records show that when The Arno Recreation Ground, the Quarry Garden as we now call it, was opened to the public in 1900, a pathway from Ingestre Road (today's top path) led to a flight

of sandstone steps down into the quarry.

This photo of an Edwardian Sunday afternoon quoits game in the Quarry Garden clearly shows both the top path and the steps. At the top of the steps there was a cast-iron drinking water fountain.

The steps continued to be the route into the recreation ground until the Rose Garden was opened in 1912. At that time a new, short pathway was created from the top of the Rose Garden into the Recreation Ground.

It is this opening that gives access to the Quarry Garden today (the steps having been deliberately blocked off many years ago). But the historic evidence encouraged our volunteer group to uncover the steps from beneath 40 years of overgrowth and now you can see the result.

Secret Gardens Plant Stall – Call for Plants

The plant stall run by the Friends of the Arno has always been a great success, but it would not be without the many green fingered people who have grown, split, dug up and potted on plants to be sold. We hope you are already taking cuttings, collecting plants, and growing seedlings and potting up ready for us to sell at this year's plant stall. Any unwanted terracotta pots, tools or gardening books would be most welcome for selling too.

The plants can be delivered during

the few days before Sunday, 8th May to 1 Ingestre Road. Please label them if you know what they are, particularly if they are rare. If you would like them to be collected or have any queries, please phone Peter on 07717 291947. Alternatively, they can be delivered to the stall from 8.30am on the Sunday.

The plants stall will be in its usual place in front of the Willows in the village centre. There will also be a free Creche where you can leave your purchased plants.



Conservation/Planning Report, October 2022

APPH/22/01142

14 Hughes Lane

Proposed alterations to boundary wall.

This is a response to a refusal/enforcement on a previous application. It involves making good the wall so that it fits in with original. It also deals with the unacceptable tarmac driveway by incorporating permeable block paving for the last 2m in order to soak up rain and prevent run-off into the unadopted highway.

Oxton Society comment: support.

Tree Group Report, October 2022

CA/22/1606

7A Shrewsbury Road

Lime tree – work not specified

Oxton Society comment: After conversation with the owner, the Society would not object to raising of the canopy and professional work such as pruning.

CA/22/01394

35 Christchurch Road

Ash tree affected with "Ash Dieback" – fell

Oxton Society comment:

As we are not experts we cannot comment on the condition of the tree. However, if the diagnosis is confirmed the Society would not object to the application.

CA/22/01588

30 Fairview Road

Hornbeam – trim

Oxton Society comment:

The Society would not raise any objection to the application with the proviso that the work is carried out professionally.

T22/01529

Eldon House, Duncote Close

Work on a number of trees outlined in a comprehensive professional tree survey.

Oxton Society comment:

The Society would not object to the application.

CA/22/01218

16 Birch Road

Magnolia and Cherry trees – light pruning

Oxton Society comment:

The Society has no objection to the application.

T22/01174

26 Christchurch Road, Oxton

Beech tree – reduce canopy

Two other trees – minor pruning

Oxton Society comment:

Beech tree - This is a large and mature tree which is a conspicuous feature of the treescape and whilst the Oxton Society would not object, it would suggest that the work is undertaken professionally.

Two other trees – There is insufficient information to make a meaningful comment.

CA/22/1086

34 Templemore Road

Remove two Birch trees

Oxton Society comment:

These are two mature trees and their removal would have a significant effect on the tree

vista of the neighbourhood.

T/22/01076

2 South Hill Grove

Cedar – Remove vertical growth and keep shape of tree

Oxton Society comment:

The Society would not object to the application.

T/22/01118

24 Village Road

Beech Tree – raise crown and prune dead branches

Oxton Society comment:

The Society would not object to the application.

CA/22/01367

Yew Tree Cottage, 6 Arno Road

Yew Tree – good trim

Oxton Society comment:

The Society would raise no objection to raising of the canopy and pruning carried out by a professional.



Planning delay for new site in Oxton Conservation Area

By far the largest potential development scheme in Oxton is the proposed redevelopment of the NHS Ashton House site in Village Road.

The main part of the site has now been released for development and an application has been submitted by a developer.

Wirral Council' planners are treating the development of the site as 'general interest', especially with regard to the design quality

of the new housing.

In anticipation of this significant application, the Oxton Society drew up a list of criteria in advance which we used to evaluate it.

We judged that the application met most of our criteria.

We supported the approach adopted in terms of site layout, landscaping and access

We welcomed the retention of the

Victorian Ashton House, most of the mature trees and the boundary wall.

We were disappointed that the proposals were not designed to be carbon neutral at handover, or optimised the use of passive energy by design.

The application would see the conversion of Ashton House itself into 11 apartments, the demolition of two other NHS buildings and the building of five new dwellings.

Hanging baskets



Oxton's hanging baskets achieved a Level 5 'Outstanding' award in the Your Neighbourhood category of the RHS's North West in Bloom awards.

Pictured is the Oxton Society's John Booth who looked after the baskets throughout the summer but has now retired.

While there are maintenance workers who look after the hanging baskets from a feeding and de-heading perspective, the Oxton Society is looking for a volunteer coordinator to help organise the buying and installation of the hanging baskets and keep an eye on them during the summer and contact maintenance if there are any issues with the automatic watering system.

If you are interested, please email info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk

The Society is still looking for a local tree expert to join its Tree Group.

We need someone with arboriculture knowledge who can visit people who wish to manage their trees and advise the committee. The decision as to whether proposed work on trees is acceptable is taken by Wirral Borough Council, but the Society is asked for its opinion.

If you are interested, please email atchape@me.com

Oxton Christmas Open Studios 2022

Eleven local artists are showing their work as part of Wellington Road Art Studios' Oxton Christmas Open Studios event from 10am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday, November 26 and 27.

With everything from ceramics, jewellery, multimedia and printmaking to paintings, sculpture, illustrations and willow weaving, the artists will be spread out at four locations, all within a 10-minute walk of the centre of Oxton.

At Wellington Road Art Studios, which is just behind Hurst's Bakery (postcode CH43 2JE), you'll find displays from Gweni-Louu, painter; Marie Louise Mairs, painter; Jude Gill, ceramicist; Marie Louise Williams, willow worker; Jan Ewing, illustrator and Alison Bailey Smith, jeweller.

At Kent Street Studio (CH43 6TX) you'll find Carol Emmas,

multimedia, and Jo Williams, ceramicist.

At 30 Templemore Road (CH43 2HB) you'll find Gill Curry, printmaker, and Lynda Roberts, multimedia.

And at 1 Kylemore Road (CH43 2HA) will be Slip & Tickle, ceramics.

You can view the work of all the artists involved here

<https://linktr.ee/oxtonopenstudios>



Contact us

If you have any comments you can contact the Newsletter team via email at info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk or post to the Secretary, 7 Kylemore Road, CH43 2HA.

You can also contact the Society about any other matter using the above address or via the website

www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk

If you're not receiving emails from us with news updates, your email address is not in the database, so please let us have it. Details are confidential and will never be passed on to third parties.