



the

OXTON SOCIETY



Photo courtesy of Alla Barkova

“This is community at its very best!”

Those were the words of Wirral Mayor, Cllr George Davies who was one of over 5,000 visitors who enjoyed the return of the Secret Gardens of Oxton on May 8.

This year's record crowd was matched by a bumper fundraising profit of £39,000 which will be shared between the Oxton Society and its chosen charities Stick n Step, the Woodcraft Folk and Shaftesbury Youth Club.

Rhiannon Evans, outgoing chair of the Oxton Society, said: “What a fantastic event it was this year!

“Huge congratulations to Kirsty Cotton and Lisa Stafford who organised it and thank you to all the residents who opened their gardens and everyone who had role to play in making it such a success.

“The money raised will help the Society to fund community ►



Chris Jarrey from the Oxton Society; Secret Gardens of Oxton organiser Lisa Stafford; the Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral, Cllr George Davies and his wife, Cath; Rhiannon Evans, Chair of the Oxton Society; garden owners Jennifer and James Fell with their daughter Imogen, Suzanne Blundell and Mr Mark Blundell, the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside

► initiatives such as the Christmas lights and hanging baskets and support our conservation work in the village.”

Seventeen gardens opened to the public and there was an array of musical entertainment, children’s activities, craft and plant stalls and food outlets for people to enjoy.

Cllr Davies and his wife, Cath, were special guests along with the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mr Mark Blundell and his wife Suzanne, who were equally impressed with the occasion.

Kirsty Cotton said: “After a two-year absence, I think everyone was delighted to be able to walk around Oxton’s beautiful

gardens again in person.

“A special thank you to all of the garden owners who opened their doors to the public and answered visitors’ questions all day!

“There was a fantastic atmosphere in the village, great community spirit and thankfully the British weather played its part too.”

Fantastic fundraiser

More than 4,100 adults bought tickets for this year’s event generating in the region of £36,500.

The raffle and refreshments at Prenton Prep, organised by the Toosey family, raised more than £5,000 while rental for the stalls and other donations brought the total to around £45,000.

Expenses came to about £6,000, including the road closure (£1,700) toilets, buses, St John’s (£1,500)

which left approximately £39,000 which was shared between the Oxton Society (40 per cent) and

three local charities which helped on the day - Stick n Step, the Woodcraft Folk and Shaftesbury Youth Club, which received 20 per cent each.

This year there were donations from New Look and Edwards and sponsorship was received from Bogans Carpets, BAO, Revive Stone Walls of Oxton, Host, Ovenpro, Kumon, Beauty Rooms.

Thirty local businesses donated more than £1,000 worth of prizes.



The fabulous Secret Gardens Raffle

Open your garden



Gardens can be large with beautiful vistas...

If you enjoyed the event, please will you consider opening your garden for next year?

We have a team who will be able to advise you about what it entails. Any property within or close to the boundary of the conservation area is eligible to be considered.

One such gardener, Kevin Donovan, said: “We have been opening our garden, usually in alternate years, since the first event. It is an immensely rewarding experience. Visitors are always complimentary and ask lots of questions, and it’s very satisfying to share the pleasure which our garden gives us.

“Admittedly we put in a little bit more effort in the weeks leading up to that special Sunday, but that just means we can relax for a while before our gardening year starts all over again.”

Email secretgardens@theoxtonsociety.co.uk if you would like more information.



...or giving inspired ideas for smaller areas

Volunteers needed



Lisa Stafford and Kirsty Cotton

The Secret Gardens of Oxton is quite possibly the biggest community event in Wirral – and two people particularly pleased with how this year went are first-time organisers Kirsty Cotton and Lisa Stafford.

They took over from Jay Little and Lesley McGarrity who retired in 2020 – the year it was cancelled because of Covid.

Lisa, who has lived in the village for six years, said: “Ideally we would have shadowed Jay and Lesley in 2020 to learn the ropes but that obviously couldn’t happen.

“We started planning last September and have probably had around 15 meetings since then.

“We followed the tried and tested timescale of previous years because if it’s not broke, don’t fix it, but we added a few new elements along the way, such as the pebble trail for the children.

“Having not done it before I didn’t appreciate the scale of the event and how many people and groups are involved.



Refreshments at the Hub

“There is a committee of about 20 coordinators who take responsibility for tickets and ticket sales, maps, road closures, gardens, the hub, refreshments, raffle, health and safety, entertainers, craft stalls, marketing, coordinating the 250-plus volunteers – there are so many things to take into consideration.

“It was a learning curve for Kirsty and I but we’re pleased with how the day went, and of course the weather makes a huge difference. We’re now having a short break before starting to plan for 2023’s event in September.”

Kirsty, who has lived in Oxton for 17 years and also helps organise the Mowgli Dog Show, said:

“Volunteers are key to the Secret Gardens’ success and we need more than 300 people each year to help. Without them there simply wouldn’t be a Secret Gardens.

“They do everything from checking tickets at the garden entrances, supporting the road closures, litter picking, supervising the car parking,

serving refreshments at the Hub – everyone has a valuable role to play.

“If this year is anything to go by, next year will be even bigger and better so if anyone would like to help out then please get in touch. We try to arrange 2-3 hour shifts so that it’s not too onerous and people can enjoy the day themselves. If people can’t help on the day, they may be able to help out the day before or after with the setting up and clearing up.”

Organisers are also looking for a volunteer coordinator and children’s activities coordinator to join the organising committee. For more information email secretgardens@theoxtonsociety.co.uk



The Mayor and Mayoress of Wirral with some of the stewards who volunteered on the day



Some of the musical entertainment on the day

Music photos: courtesy of Alla Barkova

Jeff Willis has been a stalwart of the Oxton Society for more than 12 years.

He lives in Poplar Road with his wife, Christina Bridget, and the couple have three children and six grandchildren.

Born in Sunderland during the Second World War, and now an adopted 'Scouser', Jeff tells the Oxton Society Newsletter about his life on Merseyside...

Tell us about your journey from the North East to the North West

I had a long and happy childhood roaming the streets in Sunderland and then the glorious beaches of this vastly underestimated town – where everybody seemed to work either in the mines or the shipyards.

Plucked from that destiny, a place at Monkswearmouth Grammar School led to a degree in Geography at Bristol University. This was followed by a first job training in town planning in Cardiff, later qualifying as a Chartered Town Planner.

Following a research job in London I came to Liverpool in 1970 to teach at the university's Department of Civic Design. A chance encounter on Brownlow Hill led to a job in the Planning Department of the newly created Merseyside County Council.

Here I worked on the Merseyside Strategic Plan which set the tone to this day for regeneration based on a tightly defined Green Belt and a presumption on the re-use of brownfield land.

MCC was abolished in 1986 and I then managed the Merseyside Information Service, responsible for ground-breaking work in digital mapping and information systems.

My final move was to the Central Policy Unit in Liverpool City Council. Following retirement, I worked part-time for the Audit Commission and was on the Board at Arrowe Park Hospital.

What is your earliest memory?

I think I remember sitting in my pram outside the bakers in



Southwick Road, in the shadow of Wearmouth Colliery – nibbling a warm stottie cake.

I certainly remember those long hot summers when all the kids would be out in the street with the 'big girls' winding their long skipping rope and allowing the small boys to join in now and again.

And I remember the injustice of being called in for bed when the sun was still up.

When did you move to Oxton?

We moved to Kingsmead Road from Liverpool in 1984 for a garden and extra rooms when we started our family. The house was old and enormous and we were hard-up so I seemed to spend a lot of time on DIY to keep it going. I can still do joinery, plumbing and electrics but I'm winding down now. We had always envied the human scale of inner Oxton's streets, the closeness of the shops and the history that presented at every turn. In 2004 we downsized and moved into Poplar Road in the heart of Oxton, making sure that the back garden was sunny enough for morning coffee and family parties.

Why did you join the Oxton Society?

When we moved into the conservation area I already knew a couple of people on the committee of the Oxton Society and had been to a few Oxton events. Now retired, it only seemed right to offer myself

for election almost immediately to try and do a bit for the area and the community that I was joining.

I soon realised that the committee was more than a discussion group and that everybody had at least one proper Oxton job.

I was amazed at how much they were all doing and was shamed into offering myself in 2005 as convenor of the Planning Group – to pull together our comments to the council on planning applications.

One thing led to another and my efforts were extended from being a humble spear-carrier to an active role in Secret Gardens, Christmas Lights, the website and then vice-chair.

The best (and worst) bits of the Oxton Society?

The best bit is being constantly surprised about how much time and effort people are prepared to give to the Society.

There is, of course, a core of dedicated people but alongside there's an army of members who make things happen from the garden owners and car park attendants at Secret Gardens to Santa Clauses and mince-pie makers at the Lights Switch-on.

The worst bits are when people assume we have scores of full-time staff and suggest things we should be doing while not offering to help out themselves!

What is your proudest Oxton Society achievement?

When I took over the website from its originator, Graham McLean, things were changing fast and we needed to put the Society's business online. The main candidates were new members and renewals and selling tickets for Secret Gardens. I learned about websites and completely redesigned our site from scratch.

Then I was told by the experts that it was useless, so we commissioned a complete re-vamp of the site into its present form. Now the vast

Continued base of opposite page ►

Interview with 2 new businesses

Ayurveda Medics & Wellness

Ayurveda Medics & Wellness at 60 Christchurch Road is the brainchild of NHS nurse Sheeba Binu, with the support of Dr Filgin George (Ayurvedic Doctor), Chris Kelly (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) and Louise Foster (Aesthetic nurse & Trainer in aesthetics).

Sheeba, who moved to the UK in 2002 from South India, is a firm believer in Ayurveda medicine, a health system that has been in India for over 3,000 years and one of the country's traditional ways of treating people. The term Ayurveda is derived from Sanskrit words ayur (life) and veda (science or knowledge) and translates to 'Knowledge of Life'.

It's based on ancient writings that rely on a natural and holistic approach to physical and mental health and uses plants and herbs to

produce healing oils for a variety of conditions.

Sheeba, who still works at Aintree Hospital full time while developing her business, said: "I moved to Oxton 16 years ago and really love living here so decided to open my wellbeing shop in the village.

"I did a degree in plants when I lived in India and my family use these traditional treatments for everything from arthritis to back pain. I also did a Panchakarma Diploma in Ayurveda.

"I offer a range of treatments and therapies, herbal remedies, massage and pain management and have a herbal Steam Chamber in the salon.

"All of the oils I use are derived from plants and herbs and everything comes from India.

"I also offer alternative treatments such as cupping and aesthetics such as Botox, hair restoration, weight loss management (prescription



Sheeba Binu

only), vitamin drips and injections.

"I've had some great feedback from customers who said that their treatments were amazing and have regular customers now who come up me for conditions like sciatica and arthritis."

Ayurveda Medics & Wellbeing is open Wednesdays to Saturdays.

Amy Alexandra Studio

Qualified beautician Amy Alexandra had hoped to open her first salon in The Willows during lockdown.

However, the day after she viewed the premises she found out she was pregnant with her first child and put her plans on hold.

When it became vacant again earlier this year, she jumped at the chance to move in and opened in June.

Amy said: "After I finished university, I was self-employed and worked at other salons.

"I always knew I wanted my own salon but it had to be in the right place.

"When Unit 3 became available I knew I had to have it. Rosie is 18 months old now so it is the right time.

"I was brought up in Oxton so know the area well and the salon is in the perfect location. Oxton is a lovely village with a nice vibe and the salon is new and clean and I love working here.

"I have nine ladies who work with me and we offer a range of beauty treatments such as lashes, nails, make-up and waxing as well as a

variety of aesthetics such as Botox and fillers.

"All of the ladies who work here are self-employed and skilled in different areas and they are all fully insured."



Amy Alexandra (left) outside the Studio

Jeff Willis continued

majority of members register or renew online, and most of the advance tickets for Secret Gardens are sold online.

What do I like best about the village?

I love Oxton in the spring when the

blossom and new leaves are out and I wander down to buy some milk and eggs for breakfast. I always seem to bump into somebody with a cheery good morning.

I love all the old houses and wonder about the families who lived in them – was this one an

insurance clerk, was that one a shipowner?

Oxton is changing as it adapts to modern ways of living but I love the way the sandstone walls and the trees tell me that Oxton is still in good fettle and is set to survive for many years to come.

Planning

APP/22/00080

18 HUGHES LANE

Proposal: Construction of two-storey extension, demolition of extension, outbuilding and fence and installation of fence to side of house; installation of ramp and raised land level to front and side; removal of part of front boundary wall/gate.

Oxton Society comment:

No objections to the proposals for a two-storey side extension. In principle we oppose the demolition of quality sandstone walls but we acknowledge the severe parking problems in Hughes Lane. We suggest that off-street parking could be achieved by demolishing less of the wall. We take a neutral stance to the proposals.

APP/22/00290:

15 SOUTH BANK, OXTON

Proposal: Erection of entrance porch and construction of dormer extensions/alterations

Oxton Society comment:

We believe that the Heritage Statement should have recognised the potential impact on the neighbouring listed buildings at 11 and 13 South Bank.

We always consider proposals as viewed from the public domain. From this viewpoint the proposals

have insignificant impact and would involve "less than substantial harm" to the character of the conservation area.

The main issue is the potential impact of the new first floor windows on the east elevation on the privacy of 11 South Bank. We do not comment on neighbour issues.

APP/22/00439:

14 HUGHES LANE

Proposal: Retrospective application for partial demolition and alteration of front boundary wall, demolition of retaining wall and excavation to side of drive and installation of hard surfacing to form enlarged drive.

Oxton Society comment:

Following a complaint from a member, we raised an enforcement case on this development to make the point that, in principle, there should be no works on walls involving demolition without planning permission. Now that retrospective permission has been applied for, we support this application.

APP/22/00413:45

CLAUGHTON FIRS

Proposal: Loft conversion with rear dormer.

No comment as rear dormer does not impact significantly on street scene.

LBC/22/00368:

22 VILLAGE ROAD

Proposal: This is an application for Listed Building Consent for the replacement of rear sash windows in basement, ground floor and first floor, retaining current hardwood timber frames and replacing with hardwood timber sash windows in same style as current. Replacement of hardwood timber French doors at front ground floor of property, retaining original frames and side glazed panels, replacing only wooden doors with replica wooden doors with suitable interior locking system.

Oxton Society comment:

We welcome this application for an appropriate scope of work to restore this long-vacant and highly visible village property.

APP/22/00474:

2 DUNCOTE CLOSE

Proposal: Single storey rear extension and associated roof works.

Oxton Society comment:

The proposal has minimal impact on street scene, so neutral comment.

Tree expert wanted!

THE Oxton Society is issuing another SOS for a tree expert to join our Tree Group.

This is becoming a serious matter due to the environment warming up



and trees beginning to 'like' the better growing conditions and getting out of control.

We need someone with arboricultural knowledge who can advise us and visit people who wish to manage their trees and who will need council permission to do so.

Trees were specifically mentioned by Wirral Borough Council when it established the Conservation Area in 1979.

In the last newsletter we published an article on trees outlining their importance and the need to manage their growth and the importance of residents in this task. We highlighted that what we see today

is the product of private owners who sustain this valuable heritage.

The decision as to whether proposed work on trees is acceptable is taken by the council, however the Society is asked for our opinion.

Our Tree Group visits and comments on all applications but in the past year our resources have been stretched.

The Society would welcome a discussion with any of our members who might be interested in joining the group and who has some knowledge of tree species and growth.

Please contact Alan Chape at atchape@me.com.

Walls in the Conservation Area

In the next few editions of the newsletter we will be featuring articles on the important elements of the conservation area's character and landscape.

We start with the walls which characterise many parts of the area, typically sandstone walls, but also a variety of other materials.

They provide a visual cohesion that makes Oxtun feel like a special place even with the wide variety of buildings that are found behind the walls.

It's important to understand what you can, and cannot do, when deciding to make changes to walls.



A major change occurred in 2017 when the High Court decided what the Judge described as a 'small but important point' regarding the proper approach to the demolition of walls in Conservation Areas.

It involves the distinction between altering and demolishing a wall.

The alteration of a gate or wall in a

Conservation Area is permitted development, but the demolition of such structures is not permitted.

The judgement related to a case in the Bath Conservation Area where part of a wall had been removed.

The local planning authority served an enforcement notice requiring the wall to be reinstated.

The party concerned appealed but the inspector found that the works amounted to demolition, not alteration, and as such did not constitute permitted development.

The Oxtun Management Plan, adopted by the council in July 2012, recognises the importance of

sandstone walls and gateposts and singles them out for special mention. "The loss of, or alteration to boundary walls, traditional gates and gateposts could affect a significant feature of the character of the conservation area and may detract from its integrity. All existing historic boundary

walls and gateposts should be retained. Alteration as part of any planning permission should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and when fully justified and mitigated. There should be a strong presumption in favour of resisting the loss of traditional boundary walls and vegetation in order to create



accesses or forecourt parking."

Therefore, walls in Oxtun have extensive formal protection.

The law says that you will need planning permission to: demolish a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1m high next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2m high elsewhere.

The definition of demolition includes even the partial demolition of a wall.

In some cases, planning permission is needed before you can erect or alter a gate, fence or wall. This mainly applies to increasing their height.

The same rules apply whether or not you live in a Conservation Area. Any queries on whether you need planning permission should be directed to Wirral Council's Conservation Team – 0151 691 8183.



Hanging around Oxton

Hanging basket photos courtesy of Alla Barkova



Oxton's beautiful annual hanging baskets will be brightening up the village well into October.

A small band of volunteers delivered more than 50 baskets from Dovecote Nursery in Burton and erected them on last Sunday in May.

This year we have reduced the size of the extra-large baskets which we thought might be a hazard in high

winds – which seem to be more frequent these days.

Hanging baskets coordinator, John Booth, has fixed a few glitches in the automatic watering system to get us started, but on-going maintenance will be contracted to his son, Phil Booth, for the season.

As John has now stepped back



from frontline ladder work a new volunteer, Ian Garland, will be doing the feeding and dead-heading.

Hanging Baskets is just one of our activities that we fund from profits from Secret Gardens.

They have also been recycled by the volunteers at Callister Gardens.



Design Award 2022

Nominations are invited for the Oxton Society Design Award 2022.

The purpose of our Design Award scheme is to encourage and celebrate projects which preserve or enhance the conservation area.

Projects must be located within the Conservation Area and have been completed within the two years prior to the September AGM. They can be:

- A new building or an addition to an existing building



- A renovation, upgrade or repair of an existing building
- The renovation, repair or improvement of outside features

The main criteria are:

- Make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area
- The quality of the design
- The skilful use of materials
- Visible example of good practice which can inspire future projects



Outstanding projects(s) will win the Society's Design Award and be presented with a plaque at the AGM. Other worthy projects of merit may be awarded a Certificate of Commendation.

Send nominations by email or post (see 'contact us' on back page). Ideally nominations should be accompanied by a few photos showing before and after and a summary of the work undertaken.

Full details of the Design Award Scheme, including examples of past winners are on our website at

www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk/design-award

CLOSING DATE FOR THE 2022 AWARD IS AUGUST 31, 2022.

NOTE THAT ANY PROJECT COMPLETED AFTER SEPTEMBER 2020 CAN BE NOMINATED.

Tribute – Mike Carr



Mike Carr, one of Oxtan's oldest residents, passed away on April 5 at the grand age of 101. We talk to his beloved wife, Barbara, and the couple's friends about his amazing achievements...

Mike was a man of many talents and abilities.

After leaving school he trained as a surveyor but joined the Army at the outbreak of the Second World War and moved to the Middle East for garrison duties.

Such were Mike's skills, he was soon headhunted to serve in Palestine in the newly formed Long Range Desert Group, the precursor of the SAS.

Nicknamed 'Lofty' because of his 6ft 4ins frame, he was arguably the unit's finest navigator. He spent nearly two years in Palestine and it was there that he was photographed by renowned war photographer Cecil Beaton

Mike was eventually captured and taken to Poland as a POW, however, he escaped after crawling under a gap in a barbed wire fence and walked 600 miles – guided by the stars and living on a diet of carrots from nearby farms – until he was rescued by American forces.

Mike has always been held in high regard by the Armed Forces and he was invited to unveil a plaque at Westminster Abbey by the SAS.

Mike's incredible contribution to the war efforts has featured in several history books, including *The Long Range Desert Group World War Two* by renowned military historian Gavin Mortimer.

Gavin, who flew over from Paris to attend Mike's funeral at Landican, described Mike as 'a soldier in the very finest traditions of the British Army – a combination of ingenuity, initiative, aggression and intelligence'.

Also in attendance was the son and grandson of Colonel Ralph Alger Bagnold, the founder and first commander of the LRDG.

After the war, Mike returned to the Atlas Insurance Company, becoming a building surveyor and valuer for their Liverpool office, but his love of art and wildlife, and his talent for painting, woodcarving and pottery, led him to make a career change in his 40s.

He read for a degree and gained a teaching certificate and taught art at Marian High School until his retirement. Mike was extremely well known and respected by colleagues and pupils alike who all remember him with great fondness.

It was in 1959 that Mike married Barbara, and said he felt 'he had known her forever'. Together with his two sons, Patrick and Stephen, many happy times were spent together as a family. During one holiday to the Lake District, Mike made four canoes for the family to use on the lakes.

They also enjoyed camping together and later bought a derelict cottage in Wales which they restored. When the couple retired, they bought a VW motorhome to enjoy holidays in the UK.

Mike and Barbara were the longest living residents of Oxtan and the longest serving

members of the Oxtan Society. They loved nothing better than spending time together in their garden watching the birds and it was here that they hosted a Literary Club, sharing a love of poetry and literature with fellow residents.

After putting an advert in the Post Office so many people came forward they soon had to form a second group.

The couple were often spotted sitting in the front courtyard of their home, saying 'hello' to passers-by, and many visitors to the Secret Gardens would have taken them up on their offer of taking a short rest there during their tour of the village.

They celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary in 2019 with a telegram from the Queen – the year the Oxtan Society asked him to perform the official Christmas Lights Switch On in the village – and received a second from Her Majesty the following year when Mike reached 100.

Mike will be remembered by many people for many different things; he also supported the Wirral Society of Arts and the Wildflower Trust and his paintings and woodcarvings were exhibited at the Red Rose Gallery, Blue Coat, and the Williamson.

To those closest to him, he will always be remembered for being witty, talented, intelligent and modest.



Tribute – Natalie Williams

In 2021, when The Willows development was completed, several new businesses opened their doors in the village including De'Laineys furniture shop, run by Natalie Williams.

It was with shock and sadness that customers learned of Natalie's death on March 12, at the age of 42. The Oxtan Society Newsletter talks to her mum, Lorraine, about her daughter's life...

Ambitious, independent, talented and full of fun – just some of things that people close to Natalie will remember her for.

Natalie died in hospital on March 12 from pneumonia while being treated for cancer. She had been battling the disease since 2019 but chose to only tell her immediate family and fiancé, Stewart, because she didn't want to worry people.

"She was such a positive person and wanted to deal with her illness

in her own way, it was her choice" said Lorraine. "She didn't want to bog people down with her problems. She was very spiritual and positive and believed in God. She told me once that if she was to die then there was a reason for it, that God wanted her to work for him, and she accepted that."

Natalie was born at St Catherine's Hospital on April 10, 1979.

She was brought up on the Woodchurch Estate, alongside her brother Dean, and went to school at St Michael's and later St Benedict's. She loved drama and was cast in lots of roles when she was younger.

She was determined to travel the world before she was 30 and saved up enough money to go to America when she was just 18. She spent several years working in the US and at one stage looked after Bruce Willis and Demi Moore's daughters.

She moved to Australia in 2010 – the same year the country experienced its worst flooding - and got a job in insurance, helping the flood victims.

When she returned to the UK she moved to London to pursue her acting career and had several TV appearances including Mersey Beat and The Bill.

She enjoyed a full social life in the capital, attending many show biz parties with her friends, but Natalie became homesick and when the recruitment agency she had been working for learned she was leaving, they opened an office in Liverpool so she could work from there.

Her ambitious nature led her to set up her own property management company and this was soon followed by De'laineys online furniture store in 2019 and the opening of her shop in Oxtan village 18 months later.

She told the Oxtan Society Newsletter at the time: "During lockdown sales increased with people wanting to re furnish their homes. Like other businesses we needed to navigate ourselves to reflect the current times and De'laineys Oxtan village was born. There is a sense of community and family about Oxtan. I've always felt comfortable here and I like the feel of the village."

Lorraine added: "Everyone loved Natalie and her infectious laugh. She loved partying and going out, but most of all she loved her family and friends. She was always looking to better herself and in business she always wanted people to succeed.

"Even in her darkest days she was positive. She was an amazing lady."



Society Business

In the last newsletter we announced that Rhiannon Evans will be stepping down as Chair of the society at our next AGM

on September 28, 2022). Nominations for the role of Chair should be made in writing to The Secretary,

The Oxtan Society, 7 Kylemore Road, Prenton, CH43 2HA and must be received by September 1, 2022.

Tribute – Carolyn Weber

In the last Newsletter, the Oxton Society sadly reported that our dear friend and colleague Carolyn Weber had died on March 5.

Carolyn was diagnosed with leukaemia in 2015 and stepped down from her voluntary work last autumn due to her health.

We have talked to Carolyn's family and friends about her life, interests and achievements...

Carolyn had so many strings to her bow, she will be fondly remembered by those who knew her for a variety of reasons.

First and foremost it was her family that gave her the greatest joy – her husband Steve, children, Charly, Tom and Sam and her three grandchildren.

Having lived in Oxton for nearly 40 years and being a real people-person, she also built up a strong network of friends which she shared common interests with.

And her passion and talent for an array of hobbies such as family history and needlework also made a lasting impression on many.

Carolyn was born on November 3, 1951 in Uxbridge but lived in Spital for several years when she was growing up as her dad, Fred, was appointed Head of Research at Unilever in Port Sunlight.

She attended Birkenhead High School before the family moved back down to Kent and at 18 she went to Oxford University to study



geography at St Hilda's College and rowed on the women's team.

It was in 1976 when she joined the Civil Service on a fast-track management programme that she met Steve, who was a town planner in the Department for Environment.

Steve said he was 'captivated' by Carolyn's 'vivacity, bubbly laugh and her interest in everyone and everything' and they were married a year later.

The couple relocated to Merseyside soon after when Steve was offered a planning role at Merseyside County Council and Carolyn joined Liverpool University's personnel department. She became personnel manager and because of her exceptional analytical, planning and organisational skills, was in charge of senior academic appointments and the preferred minute taker of the university's Vice Chancellor on select committees.

Carolyn and Steve moved to their home in Beresford Road, Oxton in 1983 and it was here that she would painstakingly follow intricate patterns to create needlework samplers and patchwork quilts, often while the family were doing jigsaws together and watching TV – such was her talent for multi-tasking!

She was fascinated with family history and through her diligent research skills and attention to detail she produced several in-depth records of her own ancestry dating back to the 1800s and Steve's, which she traced back to the Black Forest in Germany, introducing him to previously unknown relatives who are alive today.

She would also research her friends' family histories and there are several residents in the village who know their ancestry thanks to Carolyn.



Carolyn used her geography skills and planning expertise to 'choreograph' family holidays with packed itineraries, and through their love of walking, Carolyn and Steve completed the near 900-mile Wales Coastal Path walk with friends as well as the Dalesway and Leeds - Liverpool Canal walks.

After Carolyn and Steve retired from work, they joined the Oxton Society in 2008. Carolyn's many roles included being the newsletter editor, minutes secretary and archivist. She helped with the website design and maintenance, contributed to the history group's periodical and was always baking cakes and serving refreshments at the Secret Gardens and Christmas Lights Switch-on events.

Steve said Carolyn was adamant that she would not be defined by her illness in recent years and was determined to live the best life that she could. Because of her impeccable record-keeping, Carolyn kept personal journals throughout her life and these have been a great source of comfort to her family.

Rhiannon Evans, chair of the Oxton Society, added: "Carolyn made a huge contribution to the Oxton Society but more than anything, we will miss her friendship, kindness and her great example of courage and fortitude."

Friends of the Arno

*Shall I compare thee to a
summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more
temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling
buds of May, and summer's lease
hath all too short a date.*

William Shakespeare

SUMMER has finally arrived with glorious weather, wonderful plants and lots of wildlife to help us feel good.

What's been happening in the Arno?

Our team of volunteers has finally finished weeding our lovely rose garden although it's a bit like painting the Forth Bridge (a never ending task).

Our quarry steps have finally been cleared after being hidden for many years by overgrown brambles and earth. They will bring back memories for many people who walked up and down them while in the Arno and quarry, a job well done.



We had a surprise visit by the 64th Beaver's Colony who came along and did a litter pick in the rose garden, it was lovely to see youngsters getting involved. A big thank you to them.

We had a very successful Secret Gardens plant sale raising over £900.

Our green-fingered gardening group has worked extremely hard over the past few months dividing and potting up the plants to sell.

We also joined in with the painted stone hunt by hiding 55 stones around the Arno for little people to find.

We would like to thank all involved and to the many people who supported us on the day.

We also had our own Jubilee plant sale in the Arno which was another success, selling the remainder of our plants, and serving refreshments. Thanks to everyone who joined us we raised over £400.

Just a reminder our volunteers meet in the rose garden every Monday morning between 10-12pm and every first Saturday of the month. Please feel free to join us for some gardening ask us for some advice or just to have a cuppa, everyone is welcome.



We are also looking for committee members to join us so if you think you have some skills you could offer please feel free to contact us by calling our secretary Peter on 0151 6521027.

Although our volunteers do a tremendous amount of work in the Arno we are still supported by Wirral Borough Council. We would like to thank our two regular gardeners Bill & Adrian who do a great job, working alongside us and continuing to keep our open spaces looking good for people to enjoy.

Keep deadheading your plants to extend their flowering season and look out for different types of wildlife in your gardens. Remember birds are still nesting so no cutting back until late summer. Happy gardening.



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 addresses 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.