

the

# OXTON SOCIETY

free to members



## Amazing as always



Up to 5,000 people visited this year's Secret Gardens of Oxton, enjoying a fabulous family day out and helping to raise around £35,000 for local good causes.

The sun shone on Sunday, May 12 – always a bonus! – and visitors, garden owners, volunteers and organisers all reported a bumper year with lots of positive feedback.

As well as the main attraction of the gardens, street traders ran out of food, the Hub tea tent was busy all day and the artists' stalls and raffle were as popular as ever.

Oxton's local businesses all enjoyed a welcome boost and the Friends of the Arno (plant stall) and the Woodcraft Folk (kids' games) were well attended.

More than 4,000 tickets were sold (children go free) and this revenue alongside money raised from the raffle, tea tent, sponsorship and stalls resulted in a profit of

£35,000 once costs were deducted for road closures, St John's Ambulance, temporary toilets and rubbish disposal.

The money will be divided between the Oxton Society and this year's charity partners Shaftsbury Youth Club, Wirral Women & Children's Aid and Friends of Birkenhead Kennels.

Jeff Willis, Vice Chairman of the Oxton Society, said: "This magnificent sum was only made possible by our organisers Kirsty Cotton and Lisa Stafford and all of our volunteers, garden owners, sponsors and the thousands of visitors who supported another great Oxton day out."

Twenty-two gardens opened this year including several making their debut appearance (read about first time garden owner Phil Birss on pages 2 & 3).

*(Continued overleaf)*



There were 28 artisan craft and street food stalls, including homemade cakes and plants, musicians and singers and children's activities including games and a treasure hunt.

Co-organiser Lisa Stafford said: "So much hard work goes into organising this event but it's fantastic when it all comes together on the day and thousands of people have a wonderful time in our village.

"The atmosphere was amazing as always and as the biggest one-day event in Wirral, Oxton residents should be really proud that our village is showcased in this way.

"A huge thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers and sponsors because without their support, this event simply couldn't continue."

**For all the latest news follow the Secret Gardens of Oxton on Facebook.**





## The day itself was amazing

**While regular visitors to the Secret of Oxton Gardens will undoubtedly recognise those that open most years, it's always a welcome treat when new gardens open for the first time.**

There were several gardens making their debut this year, including 14 Bennetts Hill – the pride and joy of Phil Birss and his partner Jo Vickers.

Here, Phil explains what it was like to open for the first time and why he'd recommend fellow Oxton residents consider opening theirs...

### **How long have you lived in Oxton?**

I was born and bred on the Wirral, but I did not find my way to Oxton until my 30s. I'd always had it in my mind that I wanted to live here though and in 2019 we moved to Bennetts Hill and have not looked back since.

### **Why did you decide to open your garden this year?**

Sometimes in life you need a little kick up the behind to help you follow your dream, so we thought what could be more motivating, than a few thousand people exploring our garden. We both work full-time, and have two young children, so finding time for the garden can be hard. We nervously submitted our application and, to our surprise, we were accepted, and rest, as they say, is history.

### **How much preparation did it take?**

The previous owners were keen gardeners so we were lucky enough to have inherited a good base, but it would be fair to say that the garden had become a little tired in the years before we moved in. So, since 2019, we've been slowly chipping away at the structure of the garden, shaping it, stone-by-stone, into the space that we had envisioned. Five years in now and we still say that we are only halfway our 'grand plan', but hey... that's the life of a gardener – always five years away from perfection!

### **How did you feel the day itself went? (busy, stressful, enjoyable?)**

The day itself was amazing. It felt a bit like being at sea, watching the waves of people gently lapping against our green shores. Most of the time the waves were gentle, giving us time to meet people and chat, and then, in other moments, tidal waves would roll over the garden, with hundreds of excited garden fans feverishly exploring our small patch of earth. In all seriousness, we thoroughly

enjoyed the day and it was definitely worth all the hard work.

### **What feedback did you receive from visitors?**

We had some lovely comments throughout day and it was lovely to meet so many fellow garden enthusiasts. Our proudest moment, was hearing the lovely feedback about our six year old daughter, Alex, who spent the entire day giving our visitors detailed tours of the fairy garden she had built (with help from mum). She even made a few pounds in tips.



### **Did you feel supported by the organisers & would you open again?**

The whole secret gardens team have been fantastic. They provided everything we needed, from volunteers to staff the gate to all the health and safety signage we needed. We had very little to actually do on the day, apart from welcome our guest and make sure they had an enjoyable visit. We would love to open our garden again and look forward to doing in the coming years.

### **What advice would you give to anyone thinking of opening their garden?**

Opening your garden can be daunting, but for us, it was absolutely worth it. In the village we are blessed with all shapes and sizes of gardens, from the sprawling to the postage stamps, but what make the Secret Gardens so magical, is that all of them have something unique and special to offer. Our advice would be, if you love your garden, then there is a good chance that other people will love it too.



*Jo Vickers also had her art on display*

**Oxton resident and eco artist Alison Bailey Smith is proud to have both her studio and home in the village.**

Alison makes jewellery, textiles and sculptures from repurposed materials, including yoga mats, food packaging and wire from inside old television sets.

At the start of this year, she moved into a new larger studio space at [Wellington Road Art Studios](#) at 1, 2 & 28a Wellington Road.

The studio had to match her environmental ethos and so it was important that, as well as providing space to create her upcycled art, the room needed to be as cosy and well insulated as possible, while utilising items that might have been thrown away.

Alison talked about her passion for art and her love of Oxton to Laura Higginbottom, which has been adapted here for the Newsletter:

### **What's your earliest childhood memory?**

I grew up in Musselburgh near Edinburgh and remember playing lots in the garden when I was very young.

I had thrifty post-war parents and was taught not to waste anything and to see the potential in everything.

I was a huge fan of the section on Blue Peter where the presenters showed viewers the astonishing range of things that could be made from toilet rolls and yogurt pots. I was always keen to have a go and was not deterred when she didn't have the same supplies shown on TV.

I discovered a talent for creative thinking to turn materials found around the house into my own version of what I saw on screen.

### **Where did you study?**

I initially trained in jewellery at the Edinburgh College of Art, before diversifying into textiles, costume and fashion.

Much of my work incorporates wire salvaged from inside old televisions and I was once described as a 'techno cannibal' by BBC journalist Clare English. I found over 100 different colours of copper and aluminium wire inside old TVs, although unfortunately it is becoming harder to find the vintage sets. Other materials I use in my work include charity shop finds, scrap paper and sweet wrappers.



I've won the Scottish Fashion Designer of the Year, was a finalist in the Environmental Art Awards in Liverpool, and received an award for Nurturing Community Talent from Wirral Met College.

### **When did you move to Oxton and why?**

We moved to Oxton after spending ten years overseas. After a year in Liverpool we headed over to Wirral after seeing an advert in the Echo for a house for sale near Birkenhead Park and we then spent a year looking at many houses in the village and nearby.

### **What do you like best about the village?**

We have always liked living in a village within a large conurbation. In Sydney, we

lived in East Balmain and I would commute into the city on the ferry under the Sydney Harbour bridge and later in San Francisco, we lived in Bernal Heights which was a wonderful place to start a family.

### **What do you do when you're not working in your studio?**

I enjoy the public engagement aspects of being a working artist. I'm involved in organising creative projects and events that raise environmental awareness and emphasise the importance of sustainability, such as Eco Art In The Park, Wirral Borough of Culture, Ron's Place and Wirral MakeFest.

### **What would you change about the village?**

It would be great to have a creative retail shop that represents the many creatives of the area.

### **What inspires you?**

My garden with its many different flower and leaf forms, and my repurposed materials are constant sources of inspirations.

### **Tell us about your studio**

My approach to sustainability and community collaboration can be seen in the flooring which combines scavenged sound insulation from local music venue [Future Yard](#), lino from surplus stockists [ReciproCity Wirral](#) and donated mats from the mechanics next door.

The studio reveals works in progress as well as finished





items and there is an array of wires, paper, beads and fabric, all waiting to be upcycled and given a new lease of life.

There are canvases bought in a charity shop, repainted and ready to be reused. Three mannequins were found in a skip at a retail park and now wear constellations of my wire jewellery.

Donated vinyl banners, rubber mats

and hoses are to be made into models of flowers at upcoming workshops and photographic slides will become lampshades and blinds in a future project. I also provides a hub for surplus materials so that people can pass on unwanted items knowing they will find a new home with other local artists and craftspeople.

### Tell us about your work in the community

I like to get involved with community projects that encourage others to rethink waste and highlight the need to reduce, reuse, repair.

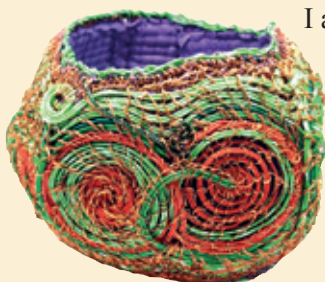
In 2022 I joined forces with **Wirral Environmental Network**, **UK Unplugged** and Wirral's **Eco Schools** programme for **Eco Art In The Park**. The project aimed to raise awareness of Wirral's biodiversity and the importance of pollinators, as well

as inspiring creativity and highlighting the need to reduce waste. I created nine giant sculptures of plants made using repurposed materials such as garden hose, food packaging, yoga mats, light fittings and toothpaste tubes. The eight wildflowers and one grass depicted by the sculptures are all native to Wirral. The sculptures toured local schools and parks in the summer of 2022, and are available for bookings by Wirral schools and community groups.

I also teach workshops to community groups with current classes available for booking including mini flowers based on the large ones made for the Eco Art in the Park project, brooches using rag rug technique, and urban foraging, where a collection of found objects is turned into a piece of jewellery.

I am on the Sustainability sub-committee for **Wirral Borough of Culture 2024**, a programme of events to celebrate the area's heritage and look ahead to its future. The committee advises in best practice and encourages all organisations and events to adopt green guidelines.

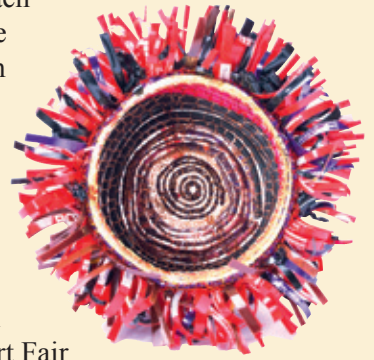
I am also a Director of **Wirral MakeFest**, an event established in 2023 and another part of the Wirral Borough of Culture programme this year. Wirral MakeFest aims to promote STEAM education in a fun, imaginative, inclusive and engaging way.



### What events do you have planned in Oxtan?

We are planning to open each time the new Oxtan Village Market is on so that we can be working but clients can collect work or purchase new pieces and come and chat with the artists after buying their foodie delights at the RAFA club.

I'm also excited to be back involved with the Oxtan Art Fair and many of us in Wellington Road Art Studios have applied for the Oxtan Open Studios which will be on the 30th November and 1st December.



To see Alison's art and get updates on her work:

Website: [www.abcraft.com](http://www.abcraft.com)

Director of Wirral MakeFest C.I.C  
<https://wirralmakefest.org>

X: <https://twitter.com/abcraft>

Instagram:  
<https://www.instagram.com/alisonbaileysmith/>

Threads: <https://www.threads.net/@alisonbaileysmith>

LinkedIn:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/770881/admin/>

Pinterest : <https://pin.it/2inum0>

Folksy: <https://folksy.com/shops/ABSCraft>

### Tree Group Report July 2024

Following John Heathman's co-ordination of applications for tree works in the Oxton Conservation area until May, Duane Chong has now taken over as Tree Co-ordinator from June, with George Harrison continuing as a member of the Tree group, and Dave Coombes, who has recently rejoined the Tree Group.

#### **T/24/00514** at 61 Arno Road

Two lime trees: Crown reduction of 20% to provide sufficient clearance from the property of 48 Birch Road. Also to remove and dead wood/branches at risk of falling.

*The Society had no objection to this application.*

#### **T/24/00348** at Rothbury, Talbot Road

Four large conifers in raised front garden: Now too high and very close to front ground floor and first floor windows denying any light. Also roots have risen penetrating into entrance drive tarmac surface creating high and bumpy surface - may also cause damage to drains in same area. Four large trees on raised bank to the roadside elevation of the property (two beech and two spruce) on the other side of the entrance drive mentioned above. The roots of these trees have also risen penetrating into entrance drive tarmac surface creating high and bumpy surfaces - may also cause damage to drains in same area. The proposal is to fell to ground level and in due course replace with small shrubs.

*Society comment:* In relation to the row of four conifers. We do not object to removing the three directly in front of the house, though keeping the fourth slightly to the right of the corner would be preferred. In terms of the two beech and two spruce, we propose that the straight spruce should be kept, whilst felling the one nearest the road, which is leaning against the roadside beech. The roadside beech should also be retained, with a crown reduction, to achieve a balance in weight and proportion. There is nothing wrong with the rear beech either and a crown reduction on this tree would be preferred. This would ensure the treescape was maintained, as allowing the removal of all trees would significantly harm the view along Talbot Road.

#### **CA/24/00268** at 48 Birch Road

Tree 1 - Australian Cheesewood tree (left hand side when facing property from road). Strong pollard to finish 2m above hedge. This is overhanging the road and has been damaged by vehicles passing and branches have fallen in high winds. Tree 2 - fruit tree (apple). Complete removal. The tree is/has been strangled by ivy and would be looking to replace with something having more amenity value. All advice taken from local arborist.

*Society comment:* No objection

#### **CA/24/00213** at Hillswood, 2 Rathmore Road

1. A substantial evergreen shrub / tree overhangs Village Road from an elevated position inside our boundary wall at the bottom of the garden. The weight of foliage has become substantial and the tree has over time developed additional ways to support this growth by some branches leaning on the top of the wall. The shrub / tree requires significant pruning. 2. A line of 12 willow trees sit on a gravel bed on the outside of the external wall of the site. The willows now require a more thorough and consistent prune to reduce and level their height and reduce the size of the horizontal canopy front and back.

*Society comment:* No objection

#### **CA/24/00167** at 21 Glenmore Road

T2 Maple - remove T2 located within the grounds of 21 Glenmore Road as it's been implicated as the cause of subsidence damage at the neighbouring property of 19 Glenmore Road. The tree works are proposed to stop the influence of the tree(s) on the soil below building foundation level and provide long term stability

*Society comment:* No objection

#### **CA/24/00217** at 12 South Bank

Two x holly trees – fell; One birch – fell; One Hornbeam - crown thin 15%. Remove branches overhanging neighbour.

*Society comment:* No objection

#### **T/24/00690** at 35 Fairview Road

The intention is to lift the crown using qualified tree surgeons, noting that wholesale pruning of beeches can damage the tree.

T1 Beech – Create up to 2m of clearance from surrounding properties. 15% crown thinning. Removal of deadwood/any limbs in decline.

*Society comment:* No objection

#### **T/24/00472** at 18 Village Road

Red maple - fell to ground level. In 2021 permission was granted to fell a cedar on the property. Previously repressed by the cedar, the red maple has benefited from more than two years of light and greater growth space. However, the maple is too close to a neighbour's property at 20 Village Road. The base of the trunk is only 1.6m from their basement wall, its base in line with the middle of their lower floor level. Higher up, the leaf canopy is in contact with No 20 and presumably the tree roots are developing too. During a site visit in 2021 to review the cedar application, an LPA representative did comment that the red maple was too close to No 20. Applicants would like to take action now before any serious damage to property occurs. They have consulted with their neighbour who has no objections to the proposed felling of the red maple; indeed they



have requested access to their land, subject to receiving permission to proceed, to enable maintenance to be undertaken to the east side elevation of their property. As for a replacement, applicants are very reluctant to plant another tree in that space, so close to our neighbour's property.

*Society comment:* No objection. The location of this tree gives limited space for future growth. A replacement tree to be planted anywhere on the property. It does not have to be in same location as maple.

**T/24/00461** at Pinetrees, Rose Mount Close

Cedar at back boundary of property. Work proposed to remove some limbs and upright stems. Removal of central limbs will place pressure on the tips of the large horizontal stems, supporting the upright limbs, growing above. This could potentially lead to further snap outs/failures due to the brittle nature of cedar timber. Limited pruning points on leggy vertical limbs, making retaining difficult.

*Society comment:* No objection

**CA/24/00646** at  
34 Templemore Road

Applicants have received advice from a tree surgeon that the tree in question (a maple or lime tree) is diseased and it would be best to take it down before it falls down (potentially on to the road it is located to). The leaves are shedding which is clearly not meant to happen in spring time and the trunk has white spots all over it. Applicants intend to take the tree down and replant an acer to replace it so the environment is protected.

*Society comment:* The lime tree which he had proposed felling was not diseased, but had a scaly beetle present on the bark, providing no long-term health risk, and could be easily removed. The browning of some of the leaves did not seem to be damaging and the tree was otherwise in good health. We therefore object to the felling of the lime tree.

**CA/24/00237** at **15 Fairview Road**

Proposed schedule of works:

T3 - Laburnum - Shape following work to T4.

T4 - Evergreen Oak - Reduce height and circumference by 25%.

T5 - Holly - Shape following work to T4.

T8 - Beech - Adjust height over road and path to statutory minimum.

T9 - Lime - Remove dead limbs and misshapen limbs and raise height over road and pavement to statutory minimum.

T10 - Sycamore - (in garden of 17 Fairview Road) - Remove limbs overhanging lawn.

T11 - Laurel - Shape.

Society's comments: All items proposed are reasonable, good maintenance work, as are the proposals relating to the unseen trees to the rear of the property.

*No Objection.*

**CA/24/00724** at Kent Cottage,  
Kent Street

Two self-seeded sycamore trees on the corner of Alton Road and Kent Street. They are oversized and require maintenance. Some branches are obstructing the pavement. They have grown significantly and are blocking light to the property at Kent Cottage. They have also damaged a wall. Also Scottish Power has been unable to connect the new street light because of the roots of these trees. Request for Crown lifting up to 4m, 10-15% crown thin and lateral crown reduction up to 1m from tips of limbs, to retain to natural shape.

*Society comment:* No objection to the proposed crown lifting and crown thinning whilst retaining the overall height of the canopy. Neither would we have any objection to the removal of 2 smaller self-seeded sycamore saplings in the grounds of the RAFA club.

**CA/24/00741** at 49 Birch Road

Applicant has a cherry tree in rear garden near theirs and a neighbour's home. It is around 40 years old. A third of the tree's branches are dead. It is also blocking light in both gardens. Permission requested to cut out the dead limbs and trim the rest of the tree back by a third to give it shape or cut it down completely.

*Society comment:* The cherry tree is not visible from the road nor to any extent from Croft Edge to the rear. Removal of the dead branches plus reshaping in the first instance would seem reasonable. No objection if the attempt to revitalise the tree was unsuccessful and it were to be felled in due course and replaced with a healthier specimen.

**CA/24/00716** at 13 Newburns Lane

Conifer, excessive size for limited space site, potentially causing problems with roots to property and also concern for the original sandstone wall it is adjacent to, which is a key feature of the properties on the lane. The tree is now so large that it blocks sunlight to the small garden and house and is presenting a structural challenge as mentioned above. The tree specialist has advised removal to protect the wall.

*Society comment:* No objection



# OXTON VILLAGE MARKET

A new food and craft market has opened its doors in Oxtan. Taking place on the last Sunday of every month at RAFA Club, 17 Shrewsbury Road, between 9am and 1pm, residents will be treated to an array of artisan products.

The market is the brainchild of Ash and Asma Ahmed who moved to Wirral eight years ago. Here, Ash explains the thinking behind Oxtan's exciting new offering...

## How did the idea come to life?

We absolutely love the community spirit in this beautiful part of the country. During the lockdown we started a small business called Namak Kitchen, and we take pride in producing authentic Indian and Pakistani cuisine.

Oxtan holds a great place in our hearts because our first ever pop-up stall was outside the Greens of Oxtan, and soon after that Greens started to stock our products. The feedback we received from Greens was phenomenal. Since then we have done a number of catering events including but not limited to Christmas Lights Switch On and Secret Gardens of Oxtan, and we loved every single one of them.

We have been part of Heswall and West Kirby Farmers Markets for some time now and have had the privilege of knowing some amazing local producers, and small business owners. Over the last three years, a number of local producers have shown their keen desire to be able to trade in Oxtan Village, however someone needed to take responsibility to organise a platform because this includes a considerable amount of effort, and hard work including but not limited to securing a venue, arranging quality traders, all the admin work and advertising.

After this year's Secret Gardens' event, we were having a chat with a couple of other local producers and I pledged to take responsibility! So, that's how it all came to life.

## Why Oxtan?

After speaking to a number of Oxtan residents who regularly visit other farmers markets I felt the village could benefit from a community event. This will also bring visitors from other areas of the peninsula which will benefit existing local businesses such as restaurants, cafes and bars.

## What stalls can residents expect to see?

There will be up to 30 stalls every month. Below is the list of regular food traders who will be showcasing their amazing products every month.

- Old Oaks Farm (Fresh Fruit & Veg)
- Massey's Butcher
- Pen-Y-Lan Pork (Award-Winning Free-Range Pork Sausage)
- Crosslea Farm (Free Range Farm Eggs)
- Adam & Russell (Coffee & Coffee Beans)
- Namak Kitchen (Authentic Indian Food)
- Bournes Cheshire Cheese (Award-Winning Cheshire Cheese)
- Camel Hump (Lebanese Street Food)
- Abyssinia Kitchen (Ethiopian Food)
- The Chocolate Cellar (Award Winning Luxury Chocolates)
- Pies4U (Local Award Winning Artisan Pies)
- Life On The Lot (Fresh Locally Grown Flowers Bouquet)
- WeDoughIt4U (Artisan Pizza Kits)
- Danny's Kitchen (Macedonian Pastries)
- Desserts By Dre (Cake & Bakes)
- Solo Bread (Artisan Breads, Bagels and More)
- Cake With Heart (Spanish Burnt Basque Cheese Cake)
- Mossy's Kitchen (Pet Food & Treats)
- Real Fun Guy Mushrooms (Gourmet Mushrooms, Grow Kits and Extracts)
- Has & Hel Olives (Olives, Baklava, Coated Nuts and More)
- Gluten Free Pie Company (Gluten Free Pies)
- Sunlight Bees (Local Honey)
- Seafood Shack (Fresh Fish & Seafood)

In addition, there will be new art & craft stalls every month.

## What are your hopes for the future?

We will be engaging with locals via social media and during their market visits to get their feedback. If we have the community support to make this a success, we will look to make it permanent like other farmers' markets across Wirral. We may also look to organise other events like a Summer Festival and Christmas Market. However, this all depends on what locals want.

## Dates for your diary 2024:

Sunday, August 25; Sunday, September 29;  
Sunday, October 27; Sunday, November 24;  
Sunday, December 22





## Celebrating 30 years in business

It was in April 1994 that award-winning Christine Lesley opened her first hairdressing salon.

Celebrating 30 years in business is a tremendous achievement on its own – but what's even more remarkable is that it was her first job in the trade!

Christine, whose salon is on Christchurch Road, explains: "I was working in Lunn Poly as a travel agent but I was always creative and wanted to be a hairdresser so went to Steiner College in Liverpool to train.

"After I qualified I got a £5,000 bank loan and used it to open my first salon in Wallasey.

"Everyone was advising me against doing it because I hadn't even worked in a salon and I had no clients

at all. There were four seats and the first couple of years were really difficult."

Undeterred, Christine then bought three neighbouring premises and transformed her business into a hairdressing, beauty and sunbed salon which had 14 seats and, in its prime, 15 staff.

"I had to invest to make the business a success and it paid off," said Christine. "It was a really busy salon but I decided to downsize and open in Oxton 17 years ago because I was living here at the time and wanted something more manageable.

"I've always been very hands on and cutting hair is my favourite part of the job.

"I still have clients that have been coming to me for 30 years and I have built some lovely relationships. Many clients have become friends."

Christine is committed to taking on two apprentices a year and has won awards for the number of aspiring young students she has helped. She is joined at her Oxton salon by Sheereen, who started as an apprentice herself 14 years ago, and her brother Adrian who offers barber services as well as part time colleagues Adele, Helen and Leteisha and current apprentices Niamh.

"I love my job and making people happy and most of our clients are from recommendations," said Christine. "There is a great community spirit in Oxton. The worst thing is the parking but the best thing is the people.

"The village has changed so much over the years and there are only a handful of businesses that are still here when I first opened so I'm really proud of what we've achieved."

So does Christine have any plans to retire?

"Absolutely not! In fact, watch this space, because I have exciting plans for the salon later this year!"







### **Maureen Griffiths**

The Oxton Society is sorry to announce the passing of our much-loved member, Maureen Griffiths, of Poplar Road.

Maureen moved to Oxton a few years ago from Heswall because she said she was attracted by our strong sense of community and the wonderful feel of Oxton.

She quickly made friends here and organised last year's row of cottage gardens at the Secret Gardens of Oxton.

Maureen will be sadly missed by all those who knew her.



### **Philip Penn, 1949 - 2024**

We are also sorry to announce the passing of one of the stalwarts of the Oxton Society, Philip Penn.

Philip was a man of many talents and a great supporter of the Society's activities.

He was always available when the heavy lifting was needed, especially at Secret Gardens.

He used his artistic prowess to produce wonderful photo opportunities at the Christmas Lights.

He was still delivering our newsletters to the very end and was always willing to go the extra mile to help others.

Our very popular friend will be sadly missed. Our condolences go to his family and all his many friends.



### **Olga May Lennon 1932-2024**

Olga Lennon was a dedicated supporter of the Oxton Society.

She served on our committee for nearly 20 years and was the keeper of our archives until she retired about 10 years ago.

In her prime, with her husband Alfred, Olga was one of the group who organised the very first Secret Gardens event.

Alf reported at the time: "We were overwhelmed by the turnout and worked non-stop throughout the day. At the end we all collapsed in Patrick's Toosey's garden, exhausted but elated because we had entertained about 800 visitors. The rest is history."

Olga went on to organise the raffle and laid the foundations for this popular event. The Lennons regularly opened their very secret garden, based on an old quarry, to the delight of their many visitors who discovered a magical wonderland behind an unassuming wooden gate.

Olga was passionate about Oxton Village and our local community and was always ready to make a contribution.

However, her horizons were also much broader and she loved to travel and explore her enthusiasm for art. We extend our condolences to her soulmate, Alfred.



## Design Awards 2024

### Nominations are being invited for the Oxtton Society Design Award 2024.

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

Projects must be located within the Conservation Area and have been completed within the two years prior to the next AGM in November.

#### 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 is:

- Making 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 that win the Society's Design Award will be presented with a plaque at the AGM. Other worthy projects of merit may be awarded a Certificate of Commendation.

Send your nominations by email or post (see 'Contact us' details on the back page of this newsletter). Ideally nominations should be accompanied by a few 'before and after' pictures and a summary of the work undertaken.

Closing date is August 31, 2024. Please note that any projects completed after September 2022 can be nominated.

Full details of the Design Award Scheme, including examples of past winners are on our website at [www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk/design-award/](http://www.theoxtonsociety.co.uk/design-award/)



## Friends of the Arno

A few years ago Wirral Council - faced with the need to reduce costs - made the decision to halt all future maintenance of The Little Arno along with several other small parks and open spaces across the borough.

The Friends expressed concern about The Little Arno at the time, and we have been alarmed at the rapidly deteriorating condition of this valuable pocket park, its use for fly-tipping and as a refuge for homeless people.

Recently we supported a suggestion made by Councillor Allan Brame that since the mowing regime for the Oxtton Fields had been reduced due to tree planting, it might be possible for the council gardening team to find time to mow the grass in The Little Arno. This has now been agreed and regular mowing has recommenced.

At the same time a generous offer was made by Carl Baxter, a professional gardener (Contour Home & Garden Services) who lives in Oxtton and is one of our members, to carry out some of the heavy work involving pruning back the laurel bushes which got out of control, removing brambles, and digging out self-sown sycamores and other trees that should not be there.

Carl has made a good start on this, and we will be helping over the next few weeks. Once the initial work has been achieved, the Friends will endeavour to maintain the park in future years. We also intend to place a bench for visitors and will consider other improvements.

If any Oxtton Society members would be willing to help with this project, please get in contact with Friends' secretary Peter de Figueiredo on 07717 291947.



*Some of the work that needed doing to help tidy up the Little Arno*



## Hanging Baskets

Our usual team of volunteers turned out on June 2nd to erect over 50 glorious hanging baskets in the village centre.

Our thanks go Phillipa of Station House Nurseries, Neston for once again producing the usual high-quality baskets.

Delivery was provided by Tom McMahon of Oxton House Clearances.

The automatic watering system was installed by former committee member, John Booth and is now maintained by his son, Philip.

The display is welcomed by residents and visitors throughout the summer season and will last well into October thanks in no small way to volunteer, Ian Garland, who looks after feeding and deadheading.

The Hanging Baskets is just one of the activities funded by the Oxton Society from money raised during the Secret Gardens of Oxton.



### Can you help?

The Oxton Society wouldn't be able to look after the Conservation Area and support events like the Secret Gardens of Oxton, the Christmas Lights Switch-on and the Hanging Baskets, without our volunteers and committee members.

We're still in need of support from people who have an understanding of IT systems to fill the roles of Membership Secretary and Website Manager. If you can help us in any way with these tasks, please email [info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk](mailto:info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk).

Thank you

### Oxton Society AGM

Date for the diary:

Oxton Society AGM

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November.

Venue and time TBC.



### Contact us

If you have any comments or suggestions for the Society or the Newsletter team please email [info@theoxtonsociety.co.uk](mailto: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](http://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.