

Oxford Centre of the National Trust

Newsletter February 2023

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We're listening carefully ..

As we embark on 2023, we welcome plenty of opportunity to meet up again and chat. There's plenty of choice for you within these pages, hopefully something for everyone: drop in for coffee, join us for guided walks; choose from intriguing full- and half-day visits with an Afternoon Tea; 200 Club offers prizes in 6 draws through the year; on Tuesday 21 March you can show your support at our AGM and lecture in Magdalen Auditorium; 37 of you will be on our Group Holiday based in Plymouth in April; book *NOW* for 5 days, 4 nights, dinner, bed & breakfast in and around Chester in October.

Theatre? A new venture, in January trialled the opportunity to attend the Oxford Playhouse "Evita" production with the option of pre-theatre supper. This was well received and much enjoyed, such that we'd like to offer more of the same for those to whom this appeals. We have the contact details of all who enquired for "Evita" and will stay in touch. *Don't miss out – if you'd like to be kept informed of future theatre visits, email oxfordcnt@gmail.com or ring 07802 390914*

For all of us "behind the scenes", 2023 is about "**Sustainability**" ie how much of what we're doing will take us on into next year and the one after that? And "**Legacy**" – even more important, since your Committee members are all willing to stand for another year until 2024, but some will then stand down (me, for one) which means we have to find new faces, energies and ideas to work with us during this year.

Oxford Centre may have an impressive 50 year history, but the next 5 are far more pressing! And we seek to secure our future through a 3-point plan – so please consider how YOU might

- introduce someone you know to **membership** of Oxford Centre NT
- help us out .. we want to reintroduce **coffee/tea** and a chance to meet-and-mingle at every live lecture we can offer. Yes, we know you'd love that too! Can you be one of 2 servers helping us out from time to time? Let us know – and thank you!
- seriously **consider joining Committee**, next meeting Tuesday 25 April, 10.30 – come and meet us, get a feel for the beating heart of Oxford Centre NT and *help to keep it strong and healthy* – ring **07802 390914** or email oxfordcnt@gmail.com to enquire, thank you again!

Finally, our very best news for 2023 – we've just reached the end of 3 years of negotiation with **the National Trust** on behalf of all Centres & Associations. *We asked for strong links between groups; to be more easily found on the NT website; for first-hand resources and support; that all property staff should know and welcome their local Centre; and for a genuine "connection" to the Trust itself.* For their part, **the Trust embraced these 'Partnership Principles' wholeheartedly and pledged to go on delivering all outstanding elements as the year unfolds.** This represents a new and ground-breaking level of understanding and rapport of real benefit to all. Oxford Centre has taken a pivotal role in the negotiations, in the sure and certain knowledge that every Centre & Association has the same urgent need for recognition and rapport that we've identified. The Trust agrees !

May 2023 prove to be a very good year for us all

Pauline Martin, Chair, 07802 390914, chair.ocnt@gmail.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

Our AGM is your golden opportunity to show support and to participate in decisions about how Oxford Centre is run. This year, we are delighted to re-introduce teas and coffees in the foyer to meet or make friends over a hot drink, buy a raffle ticket in support of OCNT funds. Do join us?

Formal notice here that our next Annual General Meeting of the Centre will take place in the Magdalen Auditorium at 10.45am on Tuesday 21 March 2023. The Agenda is enclosed/attached with this newsletter along with the Minutes of the AGM held on 15 March 2022.

We have vacancies we urgently need to fill – might YOU enjoy working with us? If so, please contact us at oxfordcnt@gmail.com or ring **07802 390814**. We can help nominate you to the Secretary – Pat Jones, patgj1@gmail.com, **07970 243475** – by **Tuesday 1 March latest**.

Or, less formally, just express an interest, then come along and meet us at our next Committee meeting on **Tuesday 25 April, 10.30 – 12.30** to meet us, see how we work?

Lecture at Magdalen Auditorium on 21 March, after AGM

The title given by **Rebekah Hodgkinson** to her lecture is “**Colonial Photographic Collections at the National Trust**”. She has been doing research for a DPhil in Archaeology at the University of Oxford in collaboration with the National Trust, which involves digging through photographic archives and historical records rather than digging up buried treasures!

A case study for her research is Lord George Curzon, Viceroy of India from 1899 to 1905, whose family seat was Kedleston Hall, and who also purchased Bodiam Castle and Tattershall Castle and left them to the National Trust in his will. In India, he reformed the British Government’s existing practices regarding archaeological surveys and the conservation of monuments. Most famously, he oversaw restorations at the Taj Mahal. Rebekah will show us ornate albums of photos relating to his time in India and explain her thesis exploring how the National Trust has been shaped by imperialism at different moments in its history.



*When you applied for membership of the Oxford Centre of the National Trust you gave us contact information so that we could keep you informed about forthcoming activities and invite you to take part in our events. This information is used solely for the purposes of running the Centre and its activities. It may be exchanged among members of the Committee but will not be shared with any other organisation. Your details will be kept securely, and you have the right to opt out of our communications at any time and to request to see what information we hold about you. If you wish to do this please contact: Acting **Membership Secretary**, phone **07975 678475** email: oxfordcnt@gmail.com*

A Note from the Treasurer

Membership subscriptions for 2023 were due on 1 January, and it's good to see that many members have now paid – thank you! If you haven't yet done so, please could you renew your membership now with **a subscription of £10, or £15 for two sharing an address**. We will then continue to send you newsletters and other communications about our activities during the year. I regret that if you have not paid by the end of February, we won't continue to mail to you, and you won't be eligible to book for outings, social events and so on.

Please pay either **by Bank Transfer** (details below) or by sending a cheque payable to Oxford Centre of the National Trust to me, OCNT Treasurer, 2 Cot's Green, Kidlington OX5 1UX. We're very grateful to members who continue to support the Oxford Centre.

OXFORD CENTRE OF THE NATIONAL TRUST Sort Code: 20-65-20, Account No: 33248968 (ref SUB)

2022 was a challenging year for the OCNT finances, as the number of members going on outings was reduced, as were attendances at lectures at Magdalen Auditorium. We rely on making a small surplus on all our activities which is then donated at the end of the year to local NT properties. We dug a little into our reserves to make the following donations in December 2022:

To **Greys Court**, towards a natural play area £750;
and to **Hughenden's** general donation fund £750.

We were very grateful to all members who supported our lecture programme with donations to the **Zoom lectures**, which totalled £425. The **200 Club** last year took in £700, with prizes totalling £330 given out to winning shareholders. This year, we have received £755 for the 200 Club, so many thanks to everyone who has bought shares. Draws will take place February, March, October, November and December (the January draw has already happened). It's not too late to contribute and have your share numbers entered in the forthcoming draws! The surplus after prizes are deducted goes into our donation at the end of the year to the National Trust.

I'll be reporting fully on our 2022 accounts at the AGM on March 21st.

Felicity Peacock, treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com

Final chance to book: Tuesday, 14 March 2023: VISIT TO THE ROMAN BATHS AND BATH

There are still places available on the coach for this outing to Bath, so if you'd like to join us you'd be welcome! Why not ask a friend to come with you: they don't need to be a member of OCNT.

The booking deadline has been **extended to 28 February**, so there's still time to secure places if you send in a booking form quickly. If you no longer have the form, sent out with our November Newsletter, please email oxfordcnt@gmail.com or phone 07975 678475 to request one. Cost £42, including entrance to the Roman Baths Museum, where you'll see Roman life and times recreated with stories and 3D displays, as well as gold coins and artefacts found in the excavations. Plenty of free time in Bath too – or you could skip the museum and concentrate on the shops!



Cost: £42 **Booking deadline: Tuesday 28 February**
Departing: **Wheatley, Plastow's Yard 8.30 am**
 Headington shops (outside Iceland) 8.45
 Oxford Playhouse 9.15

Leader: Felicity Peacock
Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 8.35
Cunliffe Close 9.00
Redbridge Park & Ride 9.30

VISITS MAY TO JULY 2023

Wednesday, 10 May 2023: DUAL VISIT TO THE ROMAN COTSWOLDS INCLUDING CORINIUM MUSEUM, CIRENCESTER AND NATIONAL TRUST CHEDWORTH VILLA

Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Romans settled in the Cotswolds and Cirencester became the second city in Roman Britain. Many Roman villas have been discovered in this area, Chedworth is the most significant. This day trip offers an opportunity to know more about this fascinating local Romano British civilisation.

The day is organised into two parts: we arrive at around 11:00 at the **Corinium Museum, in Cirencester**, starting the visit with a short introduction by one of the museum staff, to help orientate you around this splendidly refurbished museum. You will be offered a tea or coffee and biscuits on arrival (your entrance fee, the lecture and refreshments are included in the overall cost of the trip). You will then be given time to go around the museum with all its fascinating displays, giving insight into the daily lives of the Roman-British culture which lasted for 400 years. You can find lunch either in the museum café or in Cirencester town centre. *We will depart from Cirencester by 13:45.*

We plan to arrive at **Chedworth Villa** around 14:15, for a guided tour through the recently refurbished buildings which house the mosaics, and remains of the main part of the villa. There is a small cafe for drinks and snacks or just to relax. You're free to wander the ruins and admire the lovely surrounding countryside. *We will depart at 16:00 returning to Oxford around 17:30.*



Detail of a Mosaic at Chedworth Villa

Cost: £39 **Booking deadline Tuesday, 18 April** **Leader Matthew Johnson tel 07780 435687**
Departing: **Wheatley, Plastow's Yard: 8.30 am** **Wheatley, Ambrose Rise: 8.35**
 Bus stop outside old Nielsons offices (for those leaving their car at Thornhill): 8.45
 Headington Shops (outside Iceland): 8.55 **Cunliffe Close: 9.10**
 Oxford Playhouse: 9.25 **Parkway Park & Ride: 9.40**

Thursday, 8 June, 11am – 4 pm: DELAPRÉ ABBEY AND PARKLAND (NORTHAMPTON), A GRADE II LISTED HERITAGE BUILDING



Delapré Abbey on the outskirts of Northampton, was built in 1145 as a Cluniac nunnery – the **Abbey of St Mary de la Pré**. Today's beautiful walled garden is thought to be the nuns' burial ground. In 1290, the Abbey hosted the funeral cortege of **Queen Eleanor** and we will pass Northampton's commemorative **Eleanor Cross** – one of only three to survive today. Delapré Abbey surrendered to the crown as part of the **Dissolution of the Monasteries** in 1538, then changed hands sequentially becoming a family residence.

More recently, it saw World War II service, remaining a privately owned home until the death of Mary Bouverie, the last direct descendant of that family, in 1943. Typically Victorian 19C additions to the grounds survive and can be enjoyed today. Following decades of neglect and disrepair, Heritage Lottery Funding facilitated an ambitious £6.3 million restoration plan: today, **Delapré Park** offers open access to all across 500 acres of formal gardens, a lake, extensive woodland walkways, and much more.

Accessibility: We'll have tea/coffee and biscuits on arrival prior to a **90 minute guided tour** of the Abbey in small groups for an "immersive" experience, with seating, lifts or shallow steps. In the park, walkways are mostly level although wooded areas can be uneven, with some steps. The **Orangery café** (*nb: card purchases only*) has a terraced area with outside seating or picnic elsewhere in the grounds.

Cost: £42 **Booking deadline Tuesday, 18 April** **Leader Pauline Martin, tel 07802 390914**
Departing: **Wheatley, Plastow's Yard: 8.45 am** **Wheatley, Ambrose Rise: 8.50**
 Headington Shops (outside Iceland): 9.00 **Cunliffe Close: 9.15**
 Oxford Playhouse: 9.30 **Parkway Park & Ride: 9.45**

Tuesday, 27 June 2023, 2pm: GUIDED TOUR OF OXFORD BOTANIC GARDEN

Members of Oxford Centre are fortunate to have been invited on a Guided Tour of the Oxford Botanic Garden by Professor Simon Hiscock, the Director. He will be assisted on the day by the Deputy Director, Dr Chris Thorogood, and Curator, Mark Brent, so that numbers can be more easily managed. As well as being Director of the Botanic Garden and Arboretum, Simon Hiscock is Professor of Botany in the Department of Plant Sciences at Oxford University.



Professor Hiscock recently gave us a lecture via Zoom celebrating the Garden's 400th anniversary. "Oxford Botanic Garden is the oldest botanic garden in Britain and one of the oldest in the world. Founded in 1621 as a physic garden for teaching medical students how to identify plants used in herbal medicines, it is the birthplace of the botanical sciences at Oxford. Today it is an important centre of botanical research and teaching, plant conservation and public engagement. Looking to the future, exciting plans have been developed for state-of-the-art new glasshouses and new facilities for research and teaching, as the Botanic Garden moves confidently into its next century, an era when plants will be critical in addressing global challenges."

The historic Walled Garden is a green oasis of calm in the centre of Oxford, home to over 5,000 different types of plant from around the world. Seven display glasshouses contain plants from tropical rainforests, the world's largest water lilies, carnivorous plants, desert cacti, and alpine flora. We will be very fortunate to have experts showing us the range of plants.

We will meet inside the entrance to Oxford Botanic Garden beside the Danby Arch at 2pm. Please wear suitable shoes for some uneven ground, and bring a coat or umbrella if rain is forecast! The tour will last 60–90 minutes. Members may wish to go for a cup of tea, coffee, or other refreshments at the Garden's 'pop-up' café, run by Jericho Coffee Traders, after the tour.

Cost: £15 per person, including a contribution to the funds of the Botanic Garden

Booking deadline: Tuesday, 13 June

Visit leader: Felicity Peacock 07975 678475

Nearest bus stop Queen's Lane on Oxford High Street; nearest car park St Clements

Friday, 21 July 2023: VISIT TO DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRE, SIDDINGTON, FOR AFTERNOON TEA

How about a trip through rural Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire? We travel along the A40 to Burford and then join the scenic route through Aldsworth, Bibury, Barnsley to the outskirts of Cirencester and then on to Siddington, where we find Dobbies Garden Centre. We hope to arrive by 1pm to give you time to explore the Garden Centre where you can find everything you need for the garden (except the fairies to do the work!). I do not recommend buying 40 litre bags of compost! It is a large area which also has Sainsburys, Lakeland, Yankee Candles, clothes, food and books, jigsaws and toys. You will have time to wander around the site which is all on level ground.

The large restaurant area has been booked for Afternoon Tea at 2pm. Finger sandwiches on white and grain bread – egg mayonnaise & watercress, salmon, cream cheese & chive, cucumber & cream cheese, Wiltshire ham & mustard – followed by famous Dobbies scones served with Cornish clotted cream & jam, then scrumptious (their word) sweet treats, blackberry delice, fruit cream tart, carrot cake and mini macaroons all served at your table on a cake stand. A pot of tea or coffee, with free refills, completes the tea – there are plenty of toilets!

After tea you have time to catch up with your shopping. We will leave Dobbies at 3.30pm and come back a different route, via Fairford and Lechlade. We should be back in Oxford by 5pm (Botley Road permitting). I can personally vouch for the food – it has always been excellent.

Cost: £30 **Booking deadline: Tuesday, 13 June**

Leader: Betty Fathers

Departing: Wheatley, Plastow's Yard 10.30 am

Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 10.35

Headington shops (outside Iceland) 10.45

Cunliffe Close 11.00

Oxford Playhouse 11.15

Redbridge Park & Ride 11.30

Holiday to Chester, 2–6 October 2023



The main aim of our holidays is to visit National Trust properties together but more can be enjoyed especially in a city such as Chester where access to North Wales and the Liverpool/ Manchester areas are a short train journey away and there is a wealth of history as well as a famous zoo and an interesting cathedral. A programme is planned but members (and their friends) are free to do as they wish, be it visiting family, friends or exploring on their own. I hope that we can organise our days so that there will be time for city sightseeing as well.

The itinerary planned includes **Coughton Court, Dunham Massey, Speke Hall, Quarry Bank and Wightwick Manor** as well as short visits to the two Liverpool cathedrals. Our hotel, *The Queen at Chester*, has hosted famous people in the past including Charles Dickens, Cecil Rhodes and Lillie Langtry.

More details and a booking form are enclosed with your newsletter. The closing date for deposits is very near, **31 March 2023**, and I look forward to receiving your bookings.

Next year we may visit the Kent /East Sussex area. Watch this space for dates!

Pam Lee

Walking Group

In the November Newsletter I sketched out our walks programme for this year. I can now supply the dates:

Wednesday, 22 March: Bradenham and Hughenden

Friday, 28 April: Stowe

Tuesday, 23 May: Buscot

Wednesday, 28 June: Long Crendon

Thursday, 7 September: Waddesdon

Monday, 9 October: Grey's Court

Into each day's programme I hope to incorporate options of differing lengths (from two miles or less to six miles or more), so that some may combine a short walk with a more extended visit to the property.

If you are not on the list of walkers, and would like to receive details of each walk, please email oxfordcnt@gmail.com

Jonathan Anelay

Coffee Mornings

Our informal coffee mornings have proved very popular and provide an opportunity to meet up socially for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee with fellow members. These gatherings are held in the Weston Library Café, Broad Street, **from 10.30 to 11.45 am on the last Tuesday of the month**. Purchase your drink and perhaps a cake, then join us at our table. The planned dates over the next few months are **28 February, 28 March, 25 April, 30 May, and 27 June**. Drop in any time that suits you. See you there!

Nesta Jones

Knowing our National Trust Neighbours (continued from November's newsletter)



Greys Court

*There's a hive of activity at the Trust properties in our region. A small group of us will get together for coffee at **Grey's Court** soon to talk through it all, find ways to connect. All being well, by our next issue in July we'll be ready to share plans for visits and events in our Autumn programme. Separately, we're also investigating ways to transport smaller numbers of you to places where a large coach couldn't reach anyway. More of that to come, hopefully. Meanwhile here are just some things you might enjoy over the next few months ..*

At **Basildon Park** you might like Silent Space walks, Fridays 10am – 12 noon .. a quiet time of reflection strolling in the Hidden Valley (no need to book, usual admission charges).

Greys Court also offers silent woodland walks guided by Deborah Lewis, on Thursdays, 10.20 – 12 noon. Book your place (no charge, but usual admission charges) online.



Nuffield Place, home to one of the greatest philanthropists of the 20th century, re-opens its lovely house and gardens after Winter closure in March. See [Nuffield Place](#) for details.

Are you hosting family visits? Then you're encouraged to limber up for **Stowe** as things get sporty in the landscape gardens; follow **Hughenden's** flower power activities from seed to bloom; **Basildon Park's** activity trail ends up in a secret garden and **Greys Court's** in a cloud of blossom. Active Easter adventures also at **Waddesdon** and **Ascott**.



Coleshill's new Heritage & Skills Centre

At **Coleshill** – see [Buscot and Coleshill Estates](#) - the new **Heritage and Rural Skills Centre** launches on Saturday 20th May! Exciting times! The Orton Studio is almost ready for stone and wood carving courses, the forge is opening up and there are lots of activities and crafts courses being programmed for the year. New activities include guided tours of the Skills Centre, the Mill and the WW2 story – all need enthusiastic leaders and a site in tip-top condition!

Sarah Hannis, W Oxfordshire's Senior Volunteering & Community Officer, writes .. *"If you know of anyone who would like to do a little gardening and light maintenance, would make a brilliant tour guide or would like to support us in another way, please point them in our direction. There are other opportunities available. Anyone can come along to a volunteer recruitment event on **Tuesday 28th February between 11am and 2pm**, in the Timber Store at Coleshill or just contact me for a chat."* (Request Sarah's contact details from oxfordcnt@gmail.com or 07802 390914)

Coming up in Spring .. Over the Easter weekend, Coleshill staff are developing activities for everyone: this year, there'll be a family activity with a difference at **White Horse Hill** with a neolithic adventure trail replacing the usual Easter bunnies! More information available soon, on their website.

Do put these dates into your diary – we really don't want you to miss out ...

FEBRUARY	200 CLUB DRAW no 2 of 6 – winners will be notified
Mon 20 th	Deadline final balance payable for Plymouth holiday (17-21 April)
20 th -26 th	Zoom Lecture – Professor Simon Hiscock, <i>Oxford Botanic Garden at 400</i>
Tues 28 th	Booking deadline (extended by 1 week) Bath visit (Tues 14 March)
Tues 28 th	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45
M A R C H	200 CLUB DRAW no 3 of 6, in person – Magdalen Auditorium, on Tues 21st
Tues 14 th	*Day visit to Roman Baths, Bath with Leader, Felicity Peacock
Tues 21 st	Coffee, AGM & Lecture at Magdalen – Rebekah Hodgkinson, <i>NT Photographic Collections</i>
Weds 22nd	Guided Walk , Bradenham & Hughenden with Jonathan Anelay
Tues 28 th	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45
Fri 31 st	Booking deadline Chester holiday bookings with deposit payable (2-6 October)
A P R I L	
17 th -21 st	*Plymouth holiday
Tues 18 th	Booking deadline, Form 1 Visits: Chedworth & Cirencester (10 May) + Delapré Abbey (8 June)
Fri 28 th	Guided Walk , Stowe with Jonathan Anelay & Coffee at Weston Library café, 10.30-11.45
M A Y	
Weds 10th	*Day visit: Chedworth & Cirencester with Leader, Matthew Johnson
Tues 23 rd	Guided Walk , Buscot with Jonathan Anelay
J U N E	
Thurs 8 th	*Day visit: Delapré Abbey, Northampton with Leader, Pauline Martin
Tues 13 th	Booking deadline, Form 2 Visits: Oxford Botanic Garden (27 June) & Dobbies (21 July)
Tues 27 th	Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45 *Afternoon visit , Oxford Botanic Garden guided tour, with Leader Felicity Peacock
Thurs 28 th	Guided Walk , Long Crendon with Jonathan Anelay
J U L Y	Next newsletter issue in circulation with details of Autumn Programme
Fri 21 st	*Half day visit , Dobbies Garden Centre, Siddington with Leader, Betty Fathers

Note: *Members need to have booked a place for these events, please refer to pages 4-5

Oxford Centre NT's 2022-3 Executive Committee, Friends and Supporters

President:	Dr Nick Brown, Principal, Linacre College, Oxford
Chair:	Pauline Martin chair.ocnt@gmail.com 07802 390914
Vice Chair:	A Committee vacancy
Hon Treasurer:	Felicity Peacock treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com 07975 678475
Hon Secretary:	Pat Jones
200 Club:	Felicity Peacock
Friends 'in residence':	Pegasus Grange: Pam Lee, Val Gould Tumbling Bay Court: Mark Davies, Sally Roberts
more OCNT Friends at:	Moorside Place, Wingfield Court, William Morris Court residences
Holidays Co-ordinator:	Pam Lee, working with Plastow's Travel Ltd & Airedale Tours Ltd
Lectures:	Felicity Peacock, assisted by Karin Eldredge & Di Lynch
Membership Secretary:	A Committee vacancy ... enquire at oxfordcnt@gmail.com 07975 678475
Newsletter Editor:	Margaret Lipscomb editor.ocnt@gmail.com with proof-reading by Janet Redfern
AGM helpers:	Ellis Forman, Cathy Pickin, Jo Willoughby, Pam Lee – more names are sought
Ticket Secretaries:	Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers
Visits/Events:	Betty Fathers, Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers, Cathy Pickin, Matthew Johnson, Nesta Jones and others
Walking Group:	Jonathan Anelay
Website Editor & Publicity:	Felicity Peacock – additional help with publicity leaflets is urgently sought
Website Manager:	Ashley Castelino