

## Oxford Centre of the National Trust

### Newsletter February 2024

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<https://oxfordcnt.co.uk>

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#### OUR SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAMME: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – DO JOIN US!

*See inside the Newsletter for further details*

**Tuesday, 20 Feb: Lecture:** Dr Stephen Wass, *'The Archaeology of Stowe Landscape Garden'*, Magdalen Auditorium

**Tuesday, 27 Feb: Coffee Morning** at the Weston Library Café, Broad Street, with Nesta Jones

**Tuesday, 19 Mar: \*AGM and Lecture:** Dr Robert Saunders, *'The "Asian Mystery": Benjamin Disraeli and the Poet in Politics'* at Magdalen Auditorium

**Thursday, 21 Mar: Walks** at *Basildon Park* with Jonathan Anelay

**Tuesday, 26 Mar: Coffee Morning** at Modern Art Oxford Café, 30 Pembroke St, with Nesta Jones

**Friday, 26 Apr: Walks** at *Nuffield Place* with Jonathan Anelay

**Wednesday, 8 May: Visit** *Broadway Tower and Snowhill Manor*, with Helen Grainger

**Wednesday, 22 May: Walks** at *Buckingham Chantry Chapel* with Jonathan Anelay

**Tuesday, 18 Jun: Visit** *Worcester – Cathedral and Greyfriars House* with Matthew Johnson

**Saturday, 22 Jun: Walks** at *White Horse Hill* with Jonathan Anelay

**\*You will find your invitation to our Annual General Meeting on page 3 of this Newsletter.**

It is an important meeting to discuss the future of the Oxford Centre; our Chair is standing down after her 5-year term, and we're down to only 2 Officers and 4 Committee members, when we should have 4 Officers and at least 5 Committee members under the National Trust constitution.

Can you help?



#### OXFORD CENTRE NEEDS YOU!

Please have a chat with friends and discuss whether you could help keep us going for a few more years (we're 55 this year!). Can you nominate someone to join our discussions on Committee? We have 4 meetings a year to plan ahead and review our activities. We're quite informal.

If you'd like more information, do call or email me to discuss it. Thank you very much!

**Felicity Peacock 07975 678475 treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com**

## From the Chair

I do hope that 2024 has started well for you and that it will unfold to bring you good health and happiness in all that you plan for. January is always a busy month for our Membership Secretary and Treasurer because it brings subscription renewals for the year. Just to help out, I've recently been in touch with several members in need of a reminder or some help, for various reasons, to action this which is why I can say with some confidence that, whatever your problem is, we've probably dealt with it before and can help, once we know!

*Please always ring **07444 100273** or email [oxfordcnt@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordcnt@gmail.com) If you're not sure of anything. We're always pleased to hear from you*

You'll find appealing plans for our Spring programme outlined within these pages and we hope to meet up with most of you soon at one or more of our events. Hopefully, you're reaching for this year's diary and making a note of all the dates you won't want to forget?!

This is my last Chair's Letter as I'll be stepping down at our AGM on 19 March after a 5 year term, so I have some important thank you's to offer:

- to every member past, current and prospective for making Oxford Centre NT the friendly, vibrant organisation that it is
- to committee colleagues, friends & supporters for the fabulous work that you do to keep everything ticking over and running smoothly
- and most of all for giving me the opportunity to serve as Chair: together, we started by celebrating the remarkable achievement of OCNT's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019 and building on that success story; then Covid struck bringing drastic lockdown which changed everything for a while and, in many ways, continues to do so for each of us I believe

Here we are today despite all that – five years older, in good shape, progressive, making plans and looking forward to the year ahead. We all want that?

*Surely, then, someone will offer to take on the Chairmanship to secure our future prospects? Committee really **must** recruit new people: in a year's time OCNT's wonderful Newsletter Editor will stand down as will our Secretary so 2024 is the perfect time to join Committee, get to know us and help to ensure these vital gaps are filled before it's too late?*

**Do please get in touch if you think you can help – see para 2 above – THANK YOU!!**

**Pauline Martin, Chair, for a little while longer ...**

Oxford Centre NT is just one of a network of National Trust Supporter Groups & Volunteers across the London South East (LSE) region. At the end of this paragraph is a link for anyone with Internet access – or with a friend / neighbour / family member who might enjoy sharing this with you – to illustrate the wonderful achievements of the past year. You'll see that OCNT (*so that's each of YOU, reading this*) is part of something highly significant to the Trust. Please use this link to view for yourself their inspiring [LSE successes in 2023](#) – password is TRUST

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

Do please make a note of the date and time of our AGM  
(join us from 10.20 for coffee and the raffle first)  
and use your vote to help us set up for 2024 ..

**Magdalen Auditorium at 10.45am on Tuesday 19 March 2024**

The Agenda is enclosed/attached to this newsletter along with the Minutes of the AGM held on 21 March 2023

We urgently need to fill vacancies on the Committee, for which nominations would be warmly welcomed. These can be submitted by email to the [oxfordcnt@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordcnt@gmail.com) or by post to **OCNT Chairman, 112 Bridge Street, Oxford OX2 0DH** by mid-day **Tuesday 5 March**

*Please do consider supporting your Committee in this way. OCNT's constitution requires that Committee be made up of 4 Officers (OCNT will have 2 from March 2024, 1 of whom will retire in 2025) and no less than 5 members (1 of whom will retire in 2025)*

*Do please consider helping us out, you will be warmly welcome.*

Thank you

## Membership Subscriptions for 2024 Renew by end of February to continue your membership

Membership subscriptions for 2024 were due on 1 January, and very many thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership for this year. If you haven't yet done so, please could you renew your membership now. Subscription rates for 2024 are:

- **Single membership:** £10 to receive newsletters and booking forms by email, **or** £15 if you prefer to receive our newsletters and booking forms by post.
- **Joint membership** (two people at the same address): £15 to receive newsletters and booking forms by email, **or** £20 if you prefer to receive our newsletters and booking forms by post.
- **Please note** that paper copies of newsletters and booking forms will only be sent to members who have paid the higher rate to receive these materials by post. Members paying the email rate will need to be able to print any booking forms themselves as required.

We will then continue to send you newsletters and other communications about our activities during the year. We regret that if you have not paid your membership subscription by the end of February, we won't send you any further newsletters and you won't be eligible to book for any outings, social events and so on. Please pay either by:

- **Bank Transfer** using the details OXFORD CENTRE OF THE NATIONAL TRUST  
Sort Code: 20-65-20, Account No: 33248968 (ref SUB), or
- **sending a cheque** payable to Oxford Centre of the National Trust to OCNT Treasurer,  
2 Cot's Green, Kidlington OX5 1UX

Thank you. We very much appreciate your ongoing support.

**Louise Hodges, Membership Secretary and Felicity Peacock, Treasurer**

## VISITS MAY TO JUNE 2024

### Wednesday, 8 May 2024: BROADWAY TOWER AND SNOWSHILL MANOR (NT)



**Broadway Tower** is an eccentric folly and the brainchild of Capability Brown. Our morning there will include a chance to purchase refreshments, browse in the shop and visit the Tower Museum which tells the story of the place. You can also climb to the roof viewing platform, officially the highest point in the Cotswolds, for breathtaking views.

It is then just a short coach ride to **Snowhill Manor**, where there will be a chance to purchase refreshments, visit the Manor (timed tickets) and wander around the gardens. Snowhill is a place like no other – a world away from ordinary. It is the unconventional home of the eccentric Charles Wade. Expect the unexpected! We will leave Snowhill at approximately 4.45pm for the return journey.

National Trust members will need to show their membership cards for free entry at Snowhill. The cost for non-NT members at Snowhill is £13.30, payable on entry.



**Access:** Please note that the visit to Broadway Tower involves a walk between the café/shop and the Tower Museum. There are then quite a few steps inside the Tower. At Snowhill, the café is a little way from the car park/reception in one direction, and the Manor and gardens are along a 500 yard undulating, country path, quite steep in places, in the other direction. The shop is next to reception. There are two manual wheelchairs on site, but most of the Manor and gardens are not accessible by wheelchair. (See website for more information: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/gloucestershire-cotswolds/snowhill-manor-and-garden>.) Sensible footwear is recommended!

**Cost: £44**

**Booking deadline: Monday, 8 April**

**Leader: Helen Grainger (07479 381281)**

**Departing:**

**\*\*Wheatley, Plastow's Yard 8.15am**

**Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 8.20**

**Headington Shops (outside Iceland) 8.30**

**Cunliffe Close 8.45**

**Oxford Playhouse 9.00**

**Parkway P&R 9.15**

### Tuesday, 18 June 2024: VISIT TO WORCESTER



The day will commence with a coach journey from Oxford to Worcester via the delightful Cotswolds. Worcester is one of our ancient cities, going back to the time of the Romans, who we believe called it 'Vertis'. By 680AD the Diocese of Worcester was established, under the rule of the Saxons. It was at this time the foundations of the Cathedral were laid and on arrival at Worcester we will start by visiting this remarkable building, which sits majestically above the River Severn. A guided tour will take you around this historic place, where you will have the opportunity to see the Chantry Chapel of Prince Arthur, elder brother of Henry VIII, and the tomb of King John.

There is also one of the finest examples of a Norman Chapter House and Norman Crypt to visit, as well as the inspiring architecture of the Nave and Quire. More recently this is the cathedral in which Elgar performed throughout his life. We will spend around one hour on the tour, followed by an hour for lunch which you may partake at the Cloister Cafe, or somewhere in the centre of Worcester, if you prefer.



After lunch we will have a short guided walk through the centre of Worcester, observing some of the many interesting buildings and hearing more about the fascinating history of this city. The walk will end at the National Trust Greyfriars House. This is a fifteenth-century timbered merchant's house, which was saved from demolition in the 1930s by the Marley-Moore siblings, and handed to the Trust in 1966. We will have a tour around this delightful building, and of course visit the cafe for some refreshments, prior to returning to the coach, for the journey back to Oxford. There will of course be an entrance charge to Greyfriars, for

those who are not National Trust members.

*Please note:* There are some difficult / uneven steps in the Cathedral. At Greyfriars House there is a steep staircase / narrow passageway and an uneven cobbled entrance area.

**Cost: £43**

**Booking deadline: Monday, 8 April**

**Leader: Matthew Johnson (07780 435687)**

**\*\*Wheatley, Plastow's Yard 8.15am**

**Wheatley, Ambrose Rise 8.20**

**Headington shops (outside Iceland) 8.35**

**Cunliffe Close 8.50**

**Oxford Playhouse 9.00**

**Parkway P&R 9.15**

*\*\* Please always ensure you have sought Barbara Plastow's permission before booking with us to board at this point, by phoning her on 01865 872270*

## Walking Group News

Here is the provisional programme for the walking group in 2024: in each case there will be a shortish walk in the morning and a longer one in the afternoon. Some members come for just one of these: others for both.

**Thursday, 21 March:** Basildon Park

**Friday, 26 April:** Nuffield Place

**Wednesday, 22 May:** Buckingham Chantry Chapel

**Saturday, 22 June:** White Horse Hill

**Thursday, 5 September:** Priory Cottage, Steventon

**Monday, 7 October:** Claydon.



We try to arrange for someone from the Trust to give us a short talk about the property before we set off on our morning walk. In addition, at Nuffield Place the morning walk ( through the bluebell woods ) will be led by a garden tour guide from the Trust; and the morning walk at White Horse Hill will be led by the Trust's Ranger.

Do let me know ( [oxfordcnt@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordcnt@gmail.com) ) if you are not already on the list of walkers, and would like to join. You will then receive emailed details in advance of each day of walks.

**Jonathan Anelay**

## Coffee Mornings

Our next booked coffee morning is from 10.30am on **Tuesday, 27 February at the Weston Library Café in Broad Street**. All welcome. As usual, purchase your drink and join us at our table. The manager of the café is unable to take bookings after the middle of March, as they are due to have changes made and are uncertain about how long it is all going to take.

At the moment, I haven't found a suitable replacement, but suggest we meet on a casual basis, if necessary on two tables, at **10.15am on Tuesday, 26 March, at the Modern Art Oxford Café, 30 Pembroke Street**, and I will continue to try to book a table for us.

**Nesta Jones**

## Holidays

We regret that, due to unforeseen difficulties, we are unable to offer any holidays in this Newsletter.

**Pam Lee**

## News from our National Trust Neighbour – West Oxfordshire

**Sarah Hannis, Senior Volunteering & Community Officer for West Oxfordshire, writes about what is 'Coming up in Spring 2024':**

I'm writing this on a sunny February day, looking forward to the new season in West Oxfordshire.

Chastleton House is the first to open on Wednesday, 6 March. The Easter trail returns from Good Friday to Easter Sunday when families will be able to pick up an Explorer pack to use with a trail around the gardens. Over summer for one Tuesday a month, 'Inspired by Chastleton' out of hours days will be available – a chance for artists to spend time enjoying the peace and quiet of Chastleton's gardens creating beautiful art from painting to photography. Limited bookable places will allow artists space and time in lovely surroundings. The photo here was taken by Martin Trehwella, one of our volunteers.



Ashdown House opens on Wednesday, 3 April. Continuing from last year, visitors arriving at 4.30 will be able to have a short but glorious rooftop tour to take in the views surrounding the house.

Exciting news from Coleshill – the mill wheel has turned for the first time in two years! There is a long way to go before it is operational but it is a step in the right direction. Fingers crossed that the water levels drop soon for the next stage of clearing the mill leet. The Heritage & Rural Skills Centre has had an excellent start to the year with many courses selling out shortly after dates were published. More courses will be added throughout the year. Coleshill will also be part of Oxford Art Weeks in May with an exhibition of heritage crafts. Coleshill open days begin on the second Sunday of the month from Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> April. Guided tours of Home Farm, the Victorian model farm at the heart of Coleshill, will increase this year, offering mid-week tours that include the exhibition space.

We value the work Associations and Supporter Groups do and want to return the favour, albeit in a small way. Across West Oxfordshire, a poster has been created and put up on noticeboards to promote Supporter Groups. Staff have a crib sheet to go alongside the poster to signpost visitors to local groups and to the National Trust website if they are from further afield.

Looking forward to seeing you soon.

## A Note from the Treasurer about donations to local properties

At the end of 2023 we were able to donate £2,000 to the National Trust for projects at local properties, as follows:

£1,000 to **Nuffield Place**, for the purchase of 2 picnic tables, 'to allow more of our visitors to enjoy our picnic area comfortably'.

£500 to **Coleshill Estate**, for equipment to assist in planting saplings in the parkland: 'to create better habitats for our wildlife and to play our part in the ongoing climate crisis'. [See thank you from Richard Watson at bottom of next page.]

£500 to **Chastleton House**, towards fencing in the parkland: 'to protect the beautiful trees in the parkland from compaction we are looking to put in low chestnut fencing'.

OCNT aims to make a surplus on our activities during the year which can be donated to the National Trust. This includes funds from our 200 Club, the AGM raffle, and any surplus from our activities which include our group holidays. Personal donations are also included in the total sum donated. Many thanks to members for your contributions by taking part in our activities during the year.

I will give further details in my Treasurer's report at the AGM on 19 March.

**Felicity Peacock**

## Lectures – February 2023 to March 2024

Tuesday, 20 February 2024, at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall Street



**The Archaeology of Stowe Landscape Garden** Archaeologist **Dr Stephen Wass** has been engaged by the National Trust to carry out a variety of archaeological interventions across the park and gardens at Stowe over the past five years. His talk will give an account of these varied investigations and the light they shed on the long history of the site and the challenges that modern management of the gardens face.

**Lecture at 11am, with teas/coffees served from 10.30am in the Foyer: a chance to talk to your friends! Non-members also welcome. Cash Admission on the door: Members £5, non-members £6**

*Note to OCNT walking group: our walks on 22 May will be at Stowe and Buckingham.*

Tuesday, 19 March 2024, at Magdalen College Auditorium, Longwall St

**'The Asian Mystery': Benjamin Disraeli and the Poet in Politics** Benjamin Disraeli was the most unlikely prime minister of the 19th century. A Jew, a novelist and a failed poet, he rose to the leadership of the Tory Party while upturning all the social conventions of his day. Critics called him 'the Asian mystery'; he himself boasted of having 'an Oriental mind'; and his great rival, Gladstone, thought him a dictator in the making.



This talk by **Dr Robert Saunders**, Reader in British History at Queen Mary University of London, explores the life and career of one of Britain's most colourful and controversial prime ministers, assessing the origins of Disraeli's politics, his impact on the nineteenth century and his legacy for later generations.

**Lecture at 11.10am after the AGM at 10.45am. Teas/coffees served from 10.20am in the Foyer: a chance to talk to your friends and buy raffle tickets to support the National Trust! Non-members also welcome. Cash Admission on the door: Members £5, non-members £6**

### Future lectures, winter 2024–25

We plan to hold monthly lectures as usual from October to March, probably three at Magdalen College Auditorium and three via Zoom. Because of dwindling audience numbers, we can no longer afford to hold all our lectures at the Auditorium, unfortunately. We hope members will take advantage of being able to watch lectures via Zoom in their own home at a time of their own choosing. We also hope, however, that many of you will attend our lectures in person when these are held at Magdalen, as it's so good to meet up face-to-face with friends, old and new.

### Thank you from Coleshill

I am writing to thank you for your kind donation of £500 towards our tree planting spades. I have attached a photo of them in use last week. These spades are specifically designed for tree planting, being stronger, sharper and with an angled blade that makes the right shape hole to put the tree in. The team are really pleased with them and have found we are planting more trees a day now.

It has been a challenging season for tree planting with all the rain, but we have managed to get most of it completed now. Hopefully it will dry up enough to allow us to plant the last 1,000 trees before the end of February.

**Richard Watson, Countryside Manager, West Oxfordshire**



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

<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>200 CLUB DRAW, no 2 of 6</b>
<b>Tues, 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Lecture: Magdalen Auditorium, 10.45 – 12 noon, ALL welcome. Dr Stephen Wass, 'The Archaeology of Stowe Landscape Garden', £5 or £6 non-members, payable at the door</b>
<b>Tues, 27<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Coffee at Weston Library café, just drop-in, 10.30 – 11.45</b>
<b>MARCH</b>	<b>200 CLUB DRAW, no 3 of 6</b>
<b>Tues, 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Magdalen Auditorium, 10.45 AGM immediately followed at 11.10am by Lecture: Dr Robert Saunders, 'The "Asian Mystery": Benjamin Disraeli and the Poet in Politics'</b>
<b>Thurs, 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Guided Walks, Basildon Park with Jonathan Anelay</b>
<b>Tues, 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Coffee at Modern Art Oxford Café, just drop in, 10.15am</b>
<b>APRIL</b>	
<b>Mon, 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Booking deadline</b> for visit to Broadway Tower & Snowhill Manor (8 May) and Worcester visit (18 June)
<b>Fri, 26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Guided Walks, Nuffield Place with Jonathan Anelay</b>
<b>MAY</b>	
<b>Wed, 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>*Day Visit to Broadway Tower and Snowhill Manor, with Helen Grainger</b>
<b>Wed, 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Guided Walks, Buckingham Chantry Chapel, with Jonathan Anelay</b>
<b>JUNE</b>	
<b>Tues, 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>*Day Visit to Worcester – Cathedral and Greyfriars House, with Matthew Johnson</b>
<b>Sat, 22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>Guided Walks, White Horse Hill with Jonathan Anelay</b>

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

## Oxford Centre NT's 2023–4 Executive Committee, Friends and Supporters

<b>President:</b>	<b>Dr Nick Brown, Principal, Linacre College, Oxford</b>
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Pauline Martin <a href="mailto:chair.ocnt@gmail.com">chair.ocnt@gmail.com</a> 07802 390914 <i>retiring March 2024</i></b>
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	<b><i>A Committee vacancy</i></b>
<b>Hon Treasurer:</b>	<b>Felicity Peacock <a href="mailto:treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com">treasurer.ocnt@gmail.com</a> 07975 678475</b>
<b>Hon Secretary:</b>	<b>Pat Jones <i>retiring March 2025</i></b>
<b>200 Club:</b>	<b>Felicity Peacock</b>
<b>Friends 'in residence':</b>	<b><u>Pegasus Grange:</u> Pam Lee, Val Gould</b>
	<b><u>Tumbling Bay Court:</u> Mark Davies, Sally Roberts</b>
<b>Holidays Co-ordinator:</b>	<b>Pam Lee, working with Plastow's Travel Ltd &amp; Airedale Tours Ltd</b>
<b>Lectures:</b>	<b>Felicity Peacock, Margaret Lipscomb</b>
<b>Membership Secretary:</b>	<b>Louise Hodges <a href="mailto:membership.ocnt@gmail.com">membership.ocnt@gmail.com</a></b>
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	<b>Margaret Lipscomb <a href="mailto:editor.ocnt@gmail.com">editor.ocnt@gmail.com</a> <i>retiring March 2025</i></b> with proof-reading by Janet Redfern
<b>Auditorium helpers:</b>	<b>Michael &amp; Rachel Faulkner, David Hodges, and Cathy Pickin</b>
<b>Ticket Secretaries:</b>	<b>Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers</b>
<b>Visits/Events:</b>	<b>Betty Fathers, Rupert McNeile, Guy Rogers, Cathy Pickin, Matthew Johnson, Nesta Jones and Helen Grainger</b>
<b>Walking Group:</b>	<b>Jonathan Anelay</b>
<b>Publicity:</b>	<b>Felicity Peacock, Susan Pfunder, Caroline Walker, Pam Lee</b>
<b>Website Manager:</b>	<b>Ashley Castelino</b>

*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: Membership Secretary, phone: 07444 100273 email [membership.ocnt@gmail.com](mailto:membership.ocnt@gmail.com)*