

## Oxford Centre of the National Trust — June 2020 News

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**A note to our members, because we want to be in touch with you all, sharing any news we have, and keeping you informed as much as we can. This new-style report temporarily replaces our usual Newsletter format – we plan to circulate regular updates with any developments.**

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**Email** is simple, fast and cost-free for us. So thank you, if you are receiving this by email. May we ask – would you consider being an email buddy to 1 or 2 who don't have email, passing on our news to them in future? This would be very helpful. If you can help, **have a new email address, or we just don't know of it**, please contact **Lauriann Owens, Membership Secretary** (contact details as shown above). Thank you.

**Print** needs to be easy to distribute too and can be, with your help. Postage is costly and risks depleting our Donations funding. Stuffing envelopes, producing mailing labels, takes time that we cannot justify. Instead, we are saving time and money by hand delivery – a big thank you to our 'couriers':

- Committee members** who have, between them, been pleased to circulate 64 copies
- Various member 'friends'** who have kindly distributed a further 31

**If we can't email you** and you've received a printed copy, might you deliver to members in your locality next time? If so, please contact **the Membership Secretary** so we build up a rosta of all those who can help. Again, thank you.

**Would you prefer the option of your own, personal sae system for printed copy?** If so

- a) send 2 or 3 stamped, self-addressed envelopes numbered 1, 2 etc to the **Membership Secretary, The Black House, Henwood, Wootton, Boars Hill, Oxford OX1 5JX**
- b) Oxford Centre will use these, in sequence, for the next member mailings
- c) when you receive your final numbered envelope, it will be time to supply more sae's

**The National Trust** faces massive problems, all very well publicised recently, in emerging from lockdown and re-establishing its care and protection of 500 places, 780 miles of coastline and 250,000 hectares of countryside. Some useful links for those with email and Internet -

- <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/reopening-and-coronavirus-faqs> carries their latest news and is regularly updated
- If you are on email, you can receive emails from the National Trust with latest news of places and events. Visit the website [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk), scroll to bottom of page and under "Get in touch" you can click on "Sign up to our email newsletters".
- Alternatively, you can register as a member using your membership number (from NT card) and email address, at [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mynationaltrust/register](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mynationaltrust/register) and then specify contact preferences.
- The Trust's online shop is newly re-opened too, at <https://shop.nationaltrust.org.uk>
- A reminder of the series '*Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh*', available on CatchUp TV My5

**National Trust locally, what's happening?** The Trust's properties remain closed, as we know, but there are beautiful open parklands readily accessible, close to Oxford. Parking is often limited so visitors are asked to return another time if all spaces are taken, and to avoid parking on the verges. For instance:

- Ashridge Estates** and **Badbury Common** car parks are open.
- Buscot Village**: please - no parking on grass verges, in front of houses and driveways; take litter home.
- The Coombes, Hinton Parva site** supports 23 different butterfly species as well as rare wildflowers
- <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-buscot-and-coleshill-estates/walks-and-trails> lists walks and trails on the **Coleshill** (car park open in Old Carpenters Yard) and **Buscot Estates**
- White Horse Hill** pay-and-display car park offers free parking for National Trust members with a valid membership card (scan on the machine to receive your parking ticket) and disabled badge carriers

**Oxford Centre** has, for over 50 years, been working hard “.. to promote and prosper the work of the National Trust”. Arguably, our support is more than ever needed this year. What can we do?

**Donations to The Trust** At the end of 2019 we were able to donate £5,000 to projects at 7 local properties: we gave funds toward restoring the summer house at Nuffield Place, providing an accessibility buggy at Greys Court, and installing lighting in Coleshill Mill. At the end of this year we hope to support further projects in our region. Every member’s subscription contributes to the donations we are able to make. **You are making a difference - thank you.**

**200 Club, an update** This year’s remaining 3 prize draws in October, November and December will go ahead even if the lectures are cancelled, and prize cheques will be posted out. 16 prizes totalling £280 are yet to be awarded! (Total prize money in 2020 will amount to £475, and a donation of £560 will go to National Trust at the end of the year.) Many thanks to everyone who made this a bumper 200 Club year!

**A new programme of visits?** As you know, our programme of visits for the Summer months had to be cancelled. Depending on Government policy and guidance, we hope if at all possible to promote, by November, trips for Spring 2021. Like you, we are watching and waiting to see how and when venues and travel might become available again.

**Winter Lecture Series** Our lectures are due to start again on 20 October at Magdalen Auditorium with a fascinating story of *The Water Gypsy who became a Viscountess*, told by Julie Ann Godson. However, it remains to be seen whether the Auditorium will be open, and what any restriction on social distancing will mean for audiences. We will of course update our members, when we know the situation.

**September holiday** We are staying in close touch with those members who have booked for the planned Autumn holiday to Bournemouth and the surrounding area. We will take advice and make a final decision, latest mid-July, on whether or not this can go ahead or must be cancelled.

**Oxford Centre’s Discussion Day, “Our Water Heritage – how much do we care?”** was to be a special, celebratory event in September of this year to mark 2 important anniversaries: Oxford Centre’s recent 50<sup>th</sup> and the National Trust’s current 125<sup>th</sup>. It is now postponed to a date to be arranged sometime in 2021. From the outset it attracted broad interest from within the National Trust, amongst environmentalists and specialists in water management. We are greatly heartened that our speakers and key contacts are keen to stay in touch, hoping to participate next year.

**Our members are making news!** The latest issue of “*Group Travel Organiser*” features (page 30) in picture and in print our very own Nesta Jones and Marie Saunders, who attended the South West Group Travel Show held in Bristol in January. Whilst May’s “*Saga Magazine*” includes (pages 68-9) an article, “*I was there!*” in celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day. OCNT member Mary Turton appears there, very appropriately, since she worked at Bletchley Park in WW2 and vividly recalls celebrating VE Day.

(Thanks to OCNT ‘roving reporter’ Betty Fathers for these gems!)

**A newly-forming OCNT Walkers’ Group** Eight members have expressed interest in the concept of organised walks of differing lengths (2-10 miles) from local NT properties. The lockdown prevented the planned outing to **Coleshill** in April, but as we look ahead this kind of open air activity may be all the more important and attractive. Do let me know if you would like your name to be added to the list: **Jonathan Anelay, Vice Chair, [oxfordcnt@gmail.com](mailto:oxfordcnt@gmail.com)**

**We’ll be back soon, with more news to report. Meanwhile –**

- If you can help us by sharing emails or distributing printed copies, please let the Membership Sec know
- Contact us if you have comments or queries - we’ll print and share them next time, if appropriate
- Please also share any ideas you may have to support the National Trust, we are listening carefully
- Above all, thank you so much for your continued, vital support of Oxford Centre**

**PRE COVID-19 Oxford Centre was flourishing:** we sought 50 new members in our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year and attracted 60; attendance at Lectures was significantly increased; bookings for our wonderful Summer visits generated a waiting list; shares in 200 Club for this year were fully subscribed for the first time ever.

Thank you so much to everyone who helped to make all that happen.

**For now,** we can only bide our time while the world emerges and recovers from the pandemic.

Oxford Centre will do the same, over the next few months.