

ASSOCIATION OF OXFORD  
UNIVERSITY PENSIONERS

# NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2026 Issue 73



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD



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# Association of Oxford University Pensioners

<https://www.aoup.ox.ac.uk>

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## Membership of the Association

Staff who have worked in the University or a college until reaching retirement are eligible for AOUP membership in one of two ways. Membership is granted automatically for life to **University** staff who at the time of their retirement are employed by the University, and also to their spouses or partners. Staff who at the time of their retirement are employed by a **College**, and their spouses, partners, widows, widowers, may opt for AOUP membership by joining **as a Social member**, paying an annual subscription which is currently £5.

**Social membership** is also open to University AOUP members who choose to pay the annual subscription. All AOUP members receive the *Newsletter* twice a year, and are able to attend the winter talks.

**Social members** are entitled to apply to join in all excursions and other activities organised throughout the year.

**Membership Application forms** are available from The Membership Secretary, AOUP, The Cottage, Rear of 6A Horsefair, Banbury, OX16 0AA, or download from the AOUP web page (<http://www.aoup.ox.ac.uk>), or via email (aoup-membership@admin.ox.ac.uk).

**Subscriptions for Social Membership** are due on 1 January. If no renewal is received by 31 January you will be deemed to have withdrawn from Social Membership.

**Subscriptions:** The Treasurer, 46 Laurel Drive, Southmoor, OX13 5DJ

**Trips and Visits:** The Events Administrator (address on application forms)

**Pensioner Welfare Officer:** Julia Powles is based in Pensions, University of Oxford, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP. She can be reached on 01865 616203, where messages can also be left, or by email: [julia.powles@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:julia.powles@admin.ox.ac.uk)

**Changes of name and/or address or notifications of death should be sent to the Membership Secretary either by email or using the form inside the back cover.**

All opinions are the authors' own and not those of the editors, AOUP or the University.

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The Editors would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this edition of the AOUP Newsletter.

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## Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2026 newsletter, which includes information about many of the Association's activities that took place over the spring and early summer. You will also find details here of events planned over the coming few months.

The one big change concerning the newsletter is your new editorial team, consisting of Bobbie O'Neill, June Sutherland and Vicki Lloyd. As this is our very first newsletter please bear with us – a new team but with much the same format for the time being. We would like to thank David Bicknell and Colin Sparrow for helping us to get going.

In these pages you can find that we have kept all the old favourites: some fascinating pieces reporting on the holiday in Norfolk, which took in the Broads as well as Sandringham and Norwich.

We have included reports on some of the summer day trips as well as the winter talks and events.

The cover photo shows a view of the new Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities based on the old Radcliffe Infirmary site, which is well worth a visit; while the back cover portrays a more rural scene of the paddle boat from the highly successful holiday in Norfolk in May.

There are plenty of activities to look forward to over the autumn and winter. Don't forget to look at the website – <https://aoup.web.ox.ac.uk/> – for details and all sorts of other information.

Material for the Spring 2027 newsletter needs to reach the Editors by **8th January 2027**. It is great to have people contributing to this newsletter by writing reports on trips, but please keep to a maximum of 500 words and two or three photos. Thank you.

*The Editors*

## Chairman's Report

First of all, I'm delighted to tell you that we have a new team who have come forward to act as the editors for our Newsletter. So welcome Bobbie, June and Vicki and a huge thank you for volunteering to take on the role and Good Luck with your first issue.

I'm writing this at the beginning of July when I feel we are in mid-summer, though this is difficult to come to terms with as we are about to begin the third heatwave of the season – who knows how many more we might have this year, because we have August yet to come. To write this, I'm taking a break from watching Wimbledon tennis, Test match cricket and Formula 1 motor racing, but avoiding football. I wonder how many of you stayed up most of the night of 5<sup>th</sup> July to watch England play Mexico.

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We have now completed three of the summer visits and they seem to have been well received by the social members, and their guests, indeed the coaches have been either full or departing with only one or two empty seats. As those who booked to go on the second trip to RHS Wisley on the 24<sup>th</sup> June know, we had to cancel that particular trip owing to the issuing of a Red Weather Warning when temperatures could reach 37C that day. RHS Wisley is on the other side of the M25 from Heathrow Airport, and Heathrow had been highlighted on several occasions for having the hottest temperatures, so we thought it was unwise to go ahead with the trip. I was on the trip that visited the week before and even though it was a 'cool' 22C, and a fine sunny day, it was quite tiring walking around the grounds and there wasn't much shade, so goodness knows what it must have been like with 37C! We have re-scheduled the second visit for October and in due course will contact those who booked places on the cancelled trip.

You will see from the reports in this issue that we had an excellent week in Norwich during May. I hope you enjoy reading about the interesting places we visited.

We have just had a committee meeting during which Phil, our membership secretary, showed us some interesting figures about AOUP membership. It appears that Ordinary Membership, for the last ten years, has been very slowly increasing year on year, but the Social Membership is relatively constant. However, the Social Membership, when looked at more closely, indicates small increases most autumns, when we hold our New Members' Evenings for those who have retired during the preceding year, then slowly drifts down until the next intake of new retirees. For the record we currently have 5,886 Ordinary Members, of whom 1,250 have become Social Members.

Well, I must stop now, I don't want to miss watching the evening matches at Wimbledon.

My thanks go to the committee members for all the work they do behind the scenes to keep AOUP running, and my thanks also to all the members who support AOUP by attending our events, particularly the social events which hopefully bring you some companionship and enjoyment.

*David Bicknell*

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## Pensioner Welfare Officer's Report

We are delighted to have welcomed two new members of staff to the pension's team in recent months: Clive Poole, our new head of Pensions and Payroll, and Daniel Randall, who has joined the USS team.

The University has been busy transforming its digital platforms. There is a smart new look website where you can find out about what's been happening around the university and exciting research developments (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news>). And there is also a new Intranet for current staff and students which is accessed via the single sign on process. All of this does mean that online information may not be quite where you expect. For example, details on how to apply for a university retiree's card can now be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/staff/retirees>. If you don't have access to the internet and want to apply for a card, then you are welcome to get in touch with myself (details below) and I can send you the form through the post on behalf of the university card office. To remind everyone, a retiree's card gives you access to the Botanic Gardens, University Club and the Bodleian. You can opt to have a university email address if you wish. There is an administration fee of £15, and the card lasts for four years.

As I write this in June, it is very hot indeed. There have been lots in the news about ways to keep cool and the importance of drinking enough fluids, so I won't repeat that here beyond adding just how important staying hydrated is for our general health and wellbeing and for helping to prevent hospital admission for UTIs. The NHS Eat Well guide recommends adults drink 6 to 8 cups a day, more in hot weather or if recovering from illness. This can include water, lower fat milks, lower or sugar free drinks, tea and coffee etc. If we are going to have more frequent extreme weather events another thing to consider is getting onto the Priority Services Register for your suppliers. This means that if there is a power cut or water outage, service providers will make sure that your needs are met. Being of pensionable age is one of the eligibility criteria. You can go straight to your supplier, for example SGN for gas in Oxford, or you can contact the National Priority Services Register who will do it for you: <https://thepsr.co.uk/>. Another very valuable resource in Oxfordshire is the community Fire Service. You can request what they call a 'Safe and Well visit'. A fire-fighter will visit your home, do a home safety check, fit fire alarms if there aren't any and check existing fire alarms, as well as give advice on fire, floods and power cuts. I know a few retirees who have had these visits and found them very useful. You can request the visit yourself, or someone can do it on your behalf, including myself. Information is here: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fire-and-community-safety/community-safety/safety-home/keep-safe-and-well>.

Finally, for anyone with a serious vision impairment, I just wanted to mention the help and support available through the local charity My Vision Oxfordshire. They have a great demonstration room at their offices off the Abingdon Road in South Oxford, where they show various things that can

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make life easier, including really good light and magnification solutions as well as everyday gadgets. They also provide one to one training on getting the most from your technology if you have vision impairment. It's always best to phone first if you are planning to visit them, telephone 01865 725595. And for more information see here: <https://www.myvision.org.uk/>.

I think that is enough from me. As always do get in touch if you would like a visit, if there is something you want to discuss or you need some information. It's always nice to hear from you! If I don't answer the phone, it means I am out and about, so please just leave a message and I will get back to you.



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## Winter/Spring Talks and Events for 2026/2027

### Talks

All the talks take place on a Wednesday starting at 2.15pm in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3PW. Presentations will be held in the First Floor Lecture Theatre

|                                |                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2026  | Kathryne Crossley<br>"Honest, sober and willing:<br>the story of domestic service in Oxford<br>Colleges" |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2026 | Chrissie Gaines<br>"Owl Rescue and Rehabilitation in Oxfordshire"                                        |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> December 2026  | Irene Tracey<br>"A Conversation with the Vice Chancellor"                                                |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2027  | Duncan Murdock<br>"Uncovering Oxfordshire's Dinosaur Highway"                                            |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2027 | Jeremy Mainwaring-Burton<br>"The Queen Mother at the Castle of Mey"                                      |
| 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2027    | Ross King<br>"Claude Monet and the Painting of the Water<br>Lilies"                                      |

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## Visits

## Events

|                                                                                                                                                               |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 20 <sup>th</sup> , 21st October                                                                                                                               | Abingdon Town Walk                |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> October                                                                                                                     | Banbury Guided Tour               |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 11 <sup>th</sup> , 12 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>17 <sup>th</sup> , 20 <sup>th</sup> October                  | Bodleian Library Tour             |
| 16 <sup>th</sup> December                                                                                                                                     | AOUP Christmas Lunch              |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 19 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup><br>January                                                                          | Centre for Modern Art Oxfordshire |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 13 <sup>th</sup> , 21 <sup>st</sup> , 24 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>25 <sup>th</sup> February | Stained Glass Tour                |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> March                                                                                                  | Rash or Rational Tour             |

## AOUP trip to the Isle of Wight 14-18 May 2027

The 2027 AOUP trip will be a 5-day holiday (4 nights) on the Isle of Wight, a place where time seems to lag behind the modern world on the mainland.

There is a short ferry trip (45 minutes) from Portsmouth to the island, where we shall be based in Sandown, with excursions each day by coach to areas of interest.

We'll visit the obvious attractions, such as Osborne House, the home of Queen Victoria; the Needles and Alum Bay; and Carisbrooke Castle, where King Charles I was imprisoned. We will also explore less well-known places, including Farringford House, the home of Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ventnor Botanic Gardens and the RNLI workshop.

Further information and an application form are enclosed for social members.

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## Reports of the Spring/Summer Events

### Coventry Cathedral and Coughton Court

Our first visit of the day was to Coventry Cathedral, also known as the Church of St Michael. The earliest church was founded as a Benedictine Monastery in 1043 by Leufic, Earl of Mercia and his wife Lady Godiva, and was elevated to a Cathedral status between 1095 and 1102. The original Cathedral was destroyed in 1539 during the dissolution of the monasteries carried out by Henry VIII.



The medieval Cathedral was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries and was one of the largest parish churches in England. This church was severely damaged by incendiary bombs dropped on the 14 November 1940, destroying the roof with only the walls and tower still standing. In 1950 Basil Spence won a competition to design a new cathedral which was built on land next to the remains of the medieval church and consecrated on 25 May 1962. Outside, the new Cathedral is very angular in appearance with a striking west window, the panes of which display modern etchings of 66 angels by John Hutton. Inside the south window is a

creation of coloured glass, which looked particularly glorious on a sunny morning. The east end of the interior is dominated by a huge tapestry entitled 'Christ in Glory in the Tetramorph' by Graham Sutherland. It measures 23 x 12 metres (the size of a tennis court) and is thought to be the largest tapestry in the world, having been made as a single piece. As you walk along the nave you see eight huge stone panels, known as the 'Tablets of the Word' carved in situ with irregular lettering inspired by early Christian inscriptions, the work of Ralph Beyer.



The new Cathedral is dedicated to a role of reconciliation, with several symbols rescued from the remains of the war damaged Cathedral. These include a 'cross' made of charred beams from the roof of the destroyed building and panels constructed using fragments from the stained-glass windows smashed during the bombing.

In the afternoon we visited Coughton Court, a Tudor country house located between Studley and Alcester in Warwickshire. The Coughton Estate has been owned by the Throckmorton family since 1409 but was purchased by the National Trust in 1946. However, the family still hold a 300 year lease. On our arrival, we were welcomed by Magnus Throckmorton, who from April this year took over the management of the estate. Apparently, we were the first coach party that Magnus had the pleasure of welcoming.



The house is dominated by a gatehouse built in 1536 using stone from Bordesley and Evesham Abbeys, acquired during the dissolution of the monasteries. Access to the house was through some delightful flower beds full of colourful tulips. Inside the entrance hall we saw the huge doors of the



gatehouse which were large enough to let a carriage pass through. On display in the house are items such as a cape embroidered by Katherine of Aragon, a chemise worn by Mary Queen of Scots to her execution and the Throckmorton coat made from wool and apparently completed in one day by Sir John Throckmorton in 1811, which won him a bet of 1,000 guineas. Of particular interest

were two priest's holes used to hide Catholic clergy which were accessed by a rope in a narrow spiral stairway. A lovely touch in the dining room was a table which had been laid up for a meal, complete with vases of freshly cut flowers.

*David Bicknell*

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## Five day trip to Norfolk

### Anglesey Abbey



On our way to Norwich we stopped for lunch and a break at Anglesey Abbey in Cambridgeshire. It is now a stately home, but as its name implies, was originally a religious foundation. Augustinian Canons founded it as a hospital of St Mary during the reign of Henry I (i.e., between 1100 and 1135) and later endowed as a priory by Richard de Clare in 1212. In 1536 it was one of the first religious houses to be dissolved during the Reformation under Henry VIII. Late in Elizabeth's reign, in 1595 the Fowkes family acquired the property and converted what remained of the demolished priory into a country house. The walls of the chapter house were incorporated into the main part of the new domestic dwelling.

Later owners included the Cambridge carrier Thomas Hobson (of "Hobson's Choice"), his son-in-law barrister Thomas Parker and his descendants (it was during his time that the name was changed to Anglesey Abbey rather than Priory), Cambridgeshire MP Samuel Shephard and his daughter Lady Irvine, and George Leonard Jenyns.

Owners did not always occupy the house themselves; it was leased out as a farmhouse at times. Various families have lived there over the centuries and the last owner was Lord Fairhaven, who died in 1966 leaving the house and its contents to the National Trust with an endowment of £300,000. His collection of furniture, paintings and sculptures, clocks, tapestries, books, and objets d'art remained intact when the National Trust took it over. In particular I was impressed by the clocks throughout the building and asked how many there were, the answer was that there are 60 in the house, sadly not all working.

The bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms complete with showers over the baths seemed very modern, but the kitchen less so. I was surprised that the most valuable items were kept in a small room leading off the kitchen with a padlocked door through which they could be seen. I wondered about cooking odours contaminating them. Lord Fairhaven was also responsible for laying out the 98 acres of landscaped grounds in the style of an eighteenth Century



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Park. There was a guided tour of the gardens, but I did not go on it, being too fascinated by the house and its contents. Of all the trees in the park I was amazed to see a tree which had been struck by lightning twice, thus disproving the old adage. It was a very good place to break our journey to Norfolk.

*Sheila Allcock*

## Sandringham



Our second day was completely occupied by a visit to the King's house at Sandringham. The day was cold and mostly overcast but mercifully mostly dry. From the coach park we made a roundabout approach through woodland with flowering azaleas and rhododendrons, emerging to this vista of the house. It is built of red brick and, while impressive, has a

modern aspect, different from the usual run of stately homes.

Although the site has been occupied since Elizabethan times, the present house was built between 1870 and 1900. The land was purchased by Queen Victoria for her son, the future Edward VII, supposedly to keep him away from the bright lights of London. Victoria only visited the house twice but it has since become a favourite residence of the monarch, particularly of the late Queen Elizabeth.

Slightly surprisingly, since Norfolk is not known as a winter resort, they usually spend several months there at the turn of the year. This has produced the unusual effect of a lived-in stately home. As well as the portraits, magnificent cabinets and beautiful porcelain, you can imagine the royals sitting there, watching TV. We saw half a dozen rooms on the ground floor culminating in the grand ballroom which also served as a home cinema. We were intrigued by the carpets which in the areas where the visitors walked were covered by hard wearing substitutes with identical patterns which blended seamlessly into the priceless permanent carpets.

We were told that every year there were two great upheavals caused by the family stay at Christmas. Before they arrived the substitute carpets, along with all the trappings for the tourists were removed and then replaced when they left.

As usual at stately homes, lunch was available in the stables, along with an exhibition of royal vehicles. After lunch we walked through formal gardens

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and then open parkland to the church of St. Mary Magdelene. The TV pictures of the royal family walking to the church are a Christmas staple.

It is a typical small East Anglian village church, except that it contains many elaborate memorials to Kings and Queens.

After leaving the house we had a brief visit to Wolferton railway station, the halt for Sandringham. It received with great ceremony many royal trains carrying the crowned heads of Europe until it was closed by Dr Beeching. Nowadays they arrive by car or helicopter in a much more mundane fashion.

*Peter Lichfield*

## Wolferton Station

Wolferton was a small country station serving the village of the same name on the former King's Lynn to Hunstanton railway line, which was closed by British Rail in 1969 as one of the infamous 'Beeching Cuts'. Wolferton station is five miles from King's Lynn and became famous in the 1800s through its association with the Royal Family who used the station because of its proximity to Sandringham House.



The King's Lynn to Hunstanton line was opened in 1862 and was single track running for 15 miles from King's Lynn to a new station at Hunstanton. In February of the same year the Sandringham Estate was purchased by Queen Victoria for use as a private residence for the then young Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII. Wolferton Station would see many Royal Specials, as in 1863, a Royal Train from London to Wolferton conveyed the then Prince Edward and his bride, the future Queen Alexandra, to Sandringham after their marriage in Windsor Castle.

By the late 1890s increased traffic and the possible dangers inherent to running Royal Trains along a busy single line resulted in the doubling of the track between King's Lynn and Wolferton, with the installation of extra sidings to house the Royal Coaches. A new downside building was built to accommodate the Royal visitors and their distinguished guests, constructed in

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a timber frame Tudoresque style designed to complement many of the existing buildings on the 20,000 acre Royal Sandringham Estate. The name 'Downside' reflects the convention that all lines coming from London were called the 'down' line.

Sadly, the serenity of the surroundings was a major reason why the line came under the scrutiny of officials as they sought to slim down the railway network during the 1960s. The Royal Train last called at Wolferton in 1966.

Richard Brown, a self-made businessman, sold a truck business that he had built up and decided to see if the station building at Wolferton was still up



for sale and he bought it in 2001. He has made extensive repairs and the station platforms are open virtually every afternoon for visitors to look around and view the station and its grounds. A small outbuilding doubles up as an exhibits museum dedicated mainly to the history of Wolferton station. The museum was, unfortunately, closed

on the day we visited but there was plenty to see around the station and nearby signal box.

Richard provides free postcards and souvenir Wolferton station Edmondson card tickets to which visitors can help themselves. It's a fascinating place and it's free of charge to visit. As Richard explains: "If visitors want to make a donation during their visit, we then donate the money to organisations linked to the village or the air ambulance".

*Martin Buckland*

## **A Personal Reflection on Visiting Norwich Cathedral**

Originally the site of a Benedictine Monastery, Norwich Cathedral is the most complete Norman cathedral in England, renowned for its stunning architecture. In 1096, the site was chosen by the first Bishop of Norwich, Herbert de Losinga, who commissioned the building of a cathedral. The tall spire dominating the landscape stands as an iconic landmark that has endured for more than 900 years.

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Upon entering the cathedral, my attention was initially drawn to the grounding element of the baptismal font: a gleaming copper vessel filled with water reflecting the space above, yet once serving a very different purpose in the secular world, having been used for heating chocolate at the local Rowntree factory, with its Quaker heritage.

Then just two bays into the nave I was captivated by the uplifting presence of the magnificent organ, gleaming with gold and positioned high, gloriously proclaiming the worship of God in the heavens above.

The experience of a profound sense of space and grandeur enveloped me as I marvelled at the soaring vaulted ceilings as soft light filtered through, illuminating the beauty of fourteen bays of Romanesque limestone piers marching into the distance. Above them, vaulted fans of ribs framed the vividly coloured ceiling bosses, a remarkably preserved collection of medieval sculptural treasures which survived both the destruction of the Tudor period and the upheavals of the Civil War.

At the curved eastern end of the cathedral, I found an interesting contrast in the modern contemporary minimalist bishop's throne, positioned above the stone remains of an undoubtedly more ornate earlier Anglo-Saxon throne. The burnt pre-Conquest stone fragments beneath are associated with former bishops of East Anglia and the throne platform is connected by a flue to a niche below, which enshrines the relics of Saint Felix, the seventh-century founding bishop of the diocese, ensuring that the holy fumes were appropriately directed.

It was delightful to ponder in the beautiful Chapel of Saint Luke, discovering the Bishop Despensers Altarpiece, dating from around 1380. This remarkable five-panel work depicts scenes of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Painted and gilded in the rich Gothic style, it remains one of the cathedral's artistic treasures, of which there are many to admire.

Walking through the cloisters, the quiet passageways echo the peaceful and prayerful atmosphere of monastic life. Here I found myself appreciating the silence, tranquillity, and contemplative rhythm that once shaped the lives of the Benedictine monks.

More recently, Benedictine hospitality has been revived through the construction of the Refectory and the Hostry, built within the ruins of their medieval predecessors. Designed by Sir Michael Hopkins, they are noble twenty-first-century additions to the cathedral precinct. The Refectory was a welcome pause for delicious refreshments, and apparently the Hostry provides exhibition space, often showcasing the work of local artists.

The Cathedral Close, enclosed within the boundaries of the former monastery, stretches from the Saxon marketplace down to the river. It contains buildings dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries, including the remains of an infirmary. Amid the bustle of the modern city, it offered a blessed oasis of calm, with a Herb Garden reflecting the healing role of the infirmary using the medicinal herbs of medieval medicine.

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My experience of Norwich Cathedral was inspiring and reflective. Its rich history, magnificent architecture, artistic treasures, and peaceful surroundings combine to create a place where the past remains present, inviting a deeper sense of wonder, contemplation, and prayerful presence.

*Debbie Leek*

## **Bure Valley Railway**

One of the railway lines from Norwich runs north up to Cromer. The second station out is Hoveton and Wroxham and it was from there on 1st of January 1880 that a branch line to Aylsham was opened. Doctor Beeching is often, justifiably, blamed for closing railway routes that would once again become



important, but on this occasion economics dictated that it would close to passengers in 1952. Typical trains carried between 5 and 25 passengers, with a peak of 47 on a busy Saturday market day. Now, however, the modern Bure Valley Railway carries around 120,000 passengers a year, with trains of over 200 passengers at peak times.

The First World War saw an increase in freight traffic and more in the Second World War traffic with the construction of RAF Coltishall, adjacent to the line. Wartime saw military freight and civilian travel boosted once petrol rationing reduced road transport. Goods were handled until 1974 but passenger numbers fell so low that British Railways withdrew the service. They officially closed the line on 6 January 1982 and the track was lifted in 1984.

Fortunately, this was not the end. Norfolk County Council aimed to convert disused railways into long-distance, traffic-free paths. The Aylsham–Wroxham section was bought by Broadland District Council, who sought a sustainable way to develop both the footpath and the route. Several councillors and officers were railway enthusiasts, leading to a bold idea: build

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a narrow-gauge railway alongside the footpath. This required only half the trackbed, leaving space for a fenced, safe public path.

The new railway officially opened in 1990 and locomotives were hired from the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. Until 2001 there were several ownership changes until a small group of enthusiasts/business-people purchased the line, bringing stability. Since then no dividends have been paid to shareholders and profits have been reinvested into newly-built locomotives, carriages, infrastructure and visitor facilities.

The train we boarded was hauled by 'Spitfire' built in April 2001. We had two coaches and sat in the small compartments that each held four people.



Trundling along at the regulation 25 mph through the countryside we finally passed near the Bure River. At Wroxham we watched the steam locomotive move on to the turntable and be turned round to face the way we had come to haul the train back to Aylsham. The book shop, model railway shop and café all

had their attractions. We set off to visit Wroxham Miniature Worlds close by and then continue our journey for a boat trip on the Broads.

*Martin Buckland*

## **Wroxham Miniature Worlds**

This small museum is housed on a business park, just a short walk from the town centre of Wroxham and close to one end of the Bure Valley Railway line. The visit was the perfect break between a morning steam train ride and an afternoon boat trip on the Norfolk Broads.

Covering over 10,000 square feet, the museum is full of every type of miniature world, as well as a collection of amusement arcade machines and Margaret Seaman's Woollen Wonders.

It is these knitted buildings that greet you at the beginning of the museum and, on the day we visited Margaret herself was in attendance. The hand

knitted scale models of Sandringham House, Buckingham Palace, a 'Knittingale' Hospital and the seafront at Great Yarmouth were all on display.

Amongst the different model railway displays was a massive layout covering British railways with model trains going from city to countryside and including a freight yard. The European railway display showed trains going through the Swiss and Austrian Alps and ending in Germany.

Apart from the trains there was a detailed model city and a theme park, with tiny citizens performing scenes and actions. The Japanese railway display was an interpretation of the railway around the city of Osaka, including skyscrapers and bullet trains.



Other displays included a dolls house collection and scenic displays by a local artist Sue Wiley, whose workshop has been recreated at the museum. There was also a Little Brick collection, one on local model makers and their work and a collection of the old machines found in penny

arcades. Finally, there was the collection of more than 18,000 Matchbox toys, all part of The Mike Pearce Collection, with examples of every type of vehicle the company produced.

*Bobbie O'Neill*

## **Cruise on the River Bure on the Norfolk Broads**



During the recent five day coach trip (in May 2026), there was a cruise from Horning along the River Bure to Malthouse Broad and back. This was on Southern Comfort Mississippi Paddle Boat, owned by Mississippi River Boat Ltd. The Norfolk Broads form Britain's largest protected wetland and are a



designated National Park. They resulted from extensive peat digging (for fuel) in medieval times, which led to subsequent flooding, forming shallow lakes, which are, on average, 6–7 feet deep. The surrounding area has drainage dykes, windmills and grazing marshes, developed to manage water levels. There are seven main rivers, of which the Bure is one, the others being

the Yare, Thurne, Ant, Waveney, Chet and Wensum, which together form 125 miles of navigable waterways. The Broads are home to more than a quarter of the country's rarest and most endangered wildlife. This includes birds such as Marsh Harriers, Bitterns, Swans, Geese, Ducks, Kingfishers, Ospreys and Herons (as seen above).

There are also mammals like Otters, Water Voles, Chinese Water Deer and Grey Seals. Insects include Swallowtail Butterflies and Norfolk Hawker Dragonflies. Among the fish, there are Pike, Perch, Rudd and Bream. This leads to boating on the Broads being truly memorable and in a setting where timeless beauty mixes with nature (as shown in the photographs).



This is a colourful wonderland, where one can escape the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

*Helen and Trevor Langrish*

## Ely Cathedral

We decided to devote our time in Ely to visiting the Cathedral and the unique Stained Glass Museum. We also made the ascent of the Octagon Tower as our stop fortunately coincided with one of the tours available.

The Cathedral was founded by St. Etheldreda, Queen of Northumberland, in



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673 CE and we surely cannot forget her sister, Sexburga, who became Abbess of Ely.

Like most English Cathedrals it has many impressive architectural features including the western entrance Galilee porch from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 14<sup>th</sup> century Lady Chapel. Also, the highly decorated 15<sup>th</sup> century chapels of Bishop Alcock and Bishop West. The sudden collapse of the central Norman tower in 1322 led to the construction of the famous replacement Octagon which weighs 400 tons, and we were told, is unique in Europe.



Although the Cathedral is mainly built of hard Barnack limestone from Stamford, the earliest known purchase of bricks in England is recorded in the Ely Sacrist Rolls of the 1330s.

The roof of the Lady Chapel is the widest medieval stone structure in England spanning 46 feet and the middle point is only 18 inches higher than the sides. The beautiful stained glass interior was destroyed after the Reformation and the numerous statues were systematically beheaded.

While we were there a visiting children's group used it like a play school.

My wife, despite her vertigo, and I joined two other men to climb the Octagon with a Cathedral guide. After 180 steps over several staircases and ducking through a tiny door above the outside roof walkway we eventually reached the painted Victorian angel panels which could be swung open to view the Nave far below. The main danger is of falling over the floor joists leading up to the internal lantern structure as one admires the wooden beams above. It means not too many people can go up at once to reduce issues of supervision.

Another staircase outside takes you onto the top of the lantern for a circular walk around to admire the view. The taller Western Tower was closed whilst we were there due to the presence of nesting peregrine falcons and their chicks.

The stained glass Museum is located above the Nave and runs along the South side. There are numerous examples of all periods from the Medieval to the Modern, with many having been rescued from redundant and derelict buildings. One could, if so inclined, spend the entire day in the Cathedral but two hours had to suffice for us.

*Nigel Swietalski*

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## AOUP Ramble On



AOUP Ramble On is a friendly walking group offering a varied programme of sociable walks, usually between 4 and 6 miles, in Oxford and the surrounding countryside. Walks take place on the first Wednesday of each month and are open to AOUP Social Members and their guests.

We visit historic local towns, villages, and places of interest around the city, many of which are accessible by public transport.

Most walks are circular, returning to the starting point, although some are linear and return by public transport.

Within Oxford itself, there are many open spaces and parks to explore, from ancient farmland and the historic grazing areas of Port Meadow to the more formal University Parks, Christ Church Meadow, and Magdalen College Deer Park, all within the Oxford Ring Road.

Our walks follow picturesque field paths, riverside routes, and canal towpaths. We also enjoy seasonal walks, such as outings to see fritillaries and bluebells, as well as our Christmas mince pie walk.

The walks are sociable and welcoming, offering an excellent way to meet people while enjoying gentle exercise in a safe outdoor environment.

Pictures from recent walks can be found on the AOUP Facebook page.

If you would like to join us for a walk, or would like further information, please email Rosemary Williams at [aouprambleon@gmail.com](mailto:aouprambleon@gmail.com).

*Rosemary Williams*

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## Obituaries

The Association has been notified of the following deaths. Please note that the University's Pensions Office is not necessarily informed in every case of the deaths of widows/widowers of university pensioners. If readers are aware of any member of the Association (pensioner or spouse/partner) whose recent death has not been reported in the list, the Editors would be grateful to be informed. They can then pass the information to the Pensions Office as appropriate.

Sometimes we do not receive details of the deceased's post or departmental or college association. In such cases (**which are marked with an asterisk**) the AOUP Chairman will be glad to hear from any reader who does have the information, as it can then be recorded in a subsequent issue.

### Amplification of previous entries

**Mr Philip J Berry**, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2025, University Police and Clerk, University Examination Schools.

**Professor Daniel Walker Howe**, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2025, Rhodes Professor of American History, and Emeritus fellow of St. Catherine's College.

### 2023

**Mrs Jacqueline Harris**, December\*, widow of Donald Harris, Christ Church College.

### 2024

**Mrs Paulette Eeley**, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024, Secretary to the President, St John's College.

### 2025

**Dr Bernard RF Baillon**, 2<sup>nd</sup> February, Associate Adviser in General Practice, Medical Training School.

**Mrs Denise A Page**, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Scout, New College.

**Miss Barbara Harvey**, 8<sup>th</sup> August, Somerville College, Fellow and Tutor in Medieval History.

**Mr Michael Brooks**, 11<sup>th</sup> August, Database Developer, Department of Continuing Education.

**Reverend Mark Everitt**, 12<sup>th</sup> August, Medieval and Modern Languages and Merton College.

**Professor David Gaffan**, 15<sup>th</sup> August, Department of Experimental Psychology\*.

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**Mrs Gillian Sillence**, 17<sup>th</sup> August, Data Entry Clerk, Diabetes Research Laboratory.

**Reverend William (Billy) Watson**, 28<sup>th</sup> August, Emeritus Fellow St Peter's College\*.

**Dr Peter Clifford**, 3<sup>rd</sup> September, Reader in Mathematical Statistics, Department of Statistics.

**Professor Sir Peter Hirsch**, 12<sup>th</sup> September, Department of Materials and Emeritus Fellow of St Edmund Hall.

**Mr William Thomas**, 30<sup>th</sup> September, Lecturer in Modern History and Official Student at Christchurch College.

**Mrs Olleson**, 2<sup>nd</sup> October, widow of Edward Olleson, Faculty of Music.

**Mr Alan Trump**, 7<sup>th</sup> October, Librarian, Department of Continuing Education.

**Professor Grigory Dianov**, 22<sup>nd</sup> October, Head of Biochemistry, CRUK/MRC Oxford Institute for Radiation Oncology.

**Mr John Maitland**, 25<sup>th</sup> October, Bodleian Library\*.

**Mrs Evette Wood**, 29<sup>th</sup> October, Assistant Disability Advisor, Disability Advisory Service (Death in Service).

**Dr Anthony Blair Hunt**, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Faculty Lecturer in Medieval French, and Emeritus Fellow of St Peter's College.

**Mrs Teresa Thorp**, 8<sup>th</sup> November, Institute of Economics and Statistics and St Antony's College.

**Mr Ron Nicholson**, 16<sup>th</sup> November, Deputy Janitor, Bodleian Library.

**Dr Liesl M Osman**, 21<sup>st</sup> November, widow of Christopher Osman, Digital Archivist, Ashmolean Museum.

**Professor Margaret Matthews**, 24<sup>th</sup> November, Department of Human Anatomy and Emerita Fellow of Lady Margaret Hall.

**Mr Brian L Rush**, 24<sup>th</sup> November, widower of Valerie Rush, Servery Assistant, St Hilda's College.

**Mr John Newberry**, 28<sup>th</sup> November, Ruskin School of Art\*.

**Mrs Anne Vessey**, 30<sup>th</sup> November, wife of Emeritus Professor Martin Vessey, Department of Public Health and St Cross College.

**Dr Stephen Ashcroft**, 1<sup>st</sup> December, Lecturer and Reader in Clinical Biochemistry and Emeritus Fellow of Magdalen College.

**Mrs Anne Gonzalez**, 8<sup>th</sup> December, Tour Guide, Bodleian Library.

**Mr Ronald G Ashfield**, 9<sup>th</sup> December, Technical Support Administrator, Department of Nuclear Physics.

**Professor John Carey**, 11<sup>th</sup> December, Merton Professor of English.

**Mrs Eileen Fleming**, 16<sup>th</sup> December, widow of Stuart Fleming, Custodian, Christ Church College.

**Dr John Peach**, 17<sup>th</sup> December, Purchasing Department\*.

**Mrs Bessie Bampton**, 25<sup>th</sup> December, widow of Derek Bampton\*.

**Mrs Donna M Kilpin**, 28<sup>th</sup> December, Cleaning Supervisor, Department of Experimental Psychology.

**Mrs Maizie Johnson**, 30<sup>th</sup> December, wife of Kenneth Johnson, Photographic Technician, Department of Biochemistry.

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**Dr Tao Tao Liu**, 31<sup>st</sup> December, Senior Lecturer in Modern Chinese, Oriental Studies Faculty and Emeritus Fellow of Wadham College.

## **2026**

**Professor Desmond McConnell**, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, Professor of Physics and Chemistry of Minerals and St Hugh's College.

**Mrs Janet E Skillman**, 2<sup>nd</sup> January, Administrator, Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art.

**Mrs Lindsay Battle**, 6<sup>th</sup> January, Information officer, Chemistry IT Centre, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry Laboratory.

**Professor Arthur Stockwin**, 7<sup>th</sup> January, Director, Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies and Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's College.

**Professor Christopher White**, 8<sup>th</sup> January, Director, Ashmolean Museum and Fellow of Worcester College.

**Mrs Rose M Ballard**, 9<sup>th</sup> January, Scout, Balliol College.

**Mr Malcolm K Mundy**, 9<sup>th</sup> January, St Antony's College\*.

**Miss Marjorie H Wallace**, 12<sup>th</sup> January, Secretary, Physical and Theoretical Chemistry Laboratory.

**Professor Stephen Baxter**, 16<sup>th</sup> January, Clarendon Professor of Medieval History, Barron Fellow of St Peter's College (Death in Service).

**Mrs Betty L Reeves**, 16<sup>th</sup> January, Catering Assistant, Department of Human Anatomy.

**Mrs Joyce Holton**, 17<sup>th</sup> January, widow of John Holton, Office Manager, Reprographics.

**Mr Alexis O'Connor**, 19<sup>th</sup> January, Application Developer, IT Services (Death in Service).

**Mrs M Radda**, 19<sup>th</sup> January, Assistant, University Careers Service.

**Professor Deborah Cameron**, 20<sup>th</sup> January, Rupert Murdoch Professor of Language and Communication, English Faculty and Emerita Fellow of Worcester College.

**Mr Gordon G Earl**, 21<sup>st</sup> January, Carpenter, Department of Physics.

**Mr Martin Clarke**, 22<sup>nd</sup> January, Department of Atmospheric Physics\*.

**Mr Richard J Smale**, 23<sup>rd</sup> January, Technician, Department of Experimental Psychology.

**Mr Peter Brown**, 27<sup>th</sup> January, widower of Janice Brown, Secretary, Wolfson College.

**Mr Philip James**, 28<sup>th</sup> January, Assistant Librarian, Department of Catalogues, Bodleian Library.

**Mrs Lynn Wallen**, 28<sup>th</sup> January, Head Chef, Wolfson College.

**Mr Patrick Powell**, 29<sup>th</sup> January, Lodge Porter, Wadham College.

**Mrs Elizabeth Munday**, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, widow of Alfred Munday, Forester, Wytham Woods.

**Ms Katharine Salahi**, 6<sup>th</sup> February, Queen Elizabeth House\*.

**Mr Stephen J Widdows**, 6<sup>th</sup> February, Catering Administrator, Jesus College.

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**Mr Peter Wilkinson**, 7<sup>th</sup> February, Senior Library Assistant, Rhodes House Library/OSPS Trustee from 1978 – 2001.

**Dr Kathryn Robson**, 8<sup>th</sup> February, Safety Officer, MRC Molecular Haematology Unit, Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine.

**Mr Alan Knight**, 9<sup>th</sup> February, Design Engineer, Department of Engineering.

**Ms Nancy J Powell**, 9<sup>th</sup> February, Receptionist, Oxford Said Business School Ltd.

**Mrs Patricia A Fraser**, 10<sup>th</sup> February, Secretary/Receptionist, Department of Psychiatry.

**Mr Christopher D Hatton**, 17<sup>th</sup> February, Receptionist, Department of Biochemistry.

**Mrs Eileen M Whitworth**, 18<sup>th</sup> February, Kitchen Assistant, Green Templeton College.

**Mr Rennison S Hall**, 20<sup>th</sup> February, Paper Conservator, Museum of Natural History.

**Mrs Veryan JM Boorman**, 21<sup>st</sup> February, Admissions Assistant, Bodleian Library.

**Mrs Jill Ratcliff**, 24<sup>th</sup> February, Administrator, Clinical Neurology.

**Mrs Judith I Takacs**, 24<sup>th</sup> February, Technical Illustrator, Department of Engineering Science.

**Mrs Kathleen P Lloyd**, 25<sup>th</sup> February, widow of John Lloyd, Porter, Radcliffe Science Library.

**Mr William Linford**, 28<sup>th</sup> February, Department of Nuclear Physics\*.

**Mr Francis D Carline**, 12<sup>th</sup> March, Librarian, Bodleian Library.

**Mr Keith C Hutchence**, 14<sup>th</sup> March, widower of Julie Hutchence, Administrative Assistant, Divisional Administration.

**Mr Ken Burras**, 15<sup>th</sup> March, Superintendent, Oxford Botanic Garden.

**Mrs Sandra Kibble-White**, 17<sup>th</sup> March, Secretary, Rhodes House.

**Mrs Joan M Blackwell**, 19<sup>th</sup> March, widow of John Blackwell, Carpenter and Joiner, Plant Sciences.

**Miss Enid M Green**, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, Secretary, Bodleian Library.

**Mr Peter D Merriman**, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, widower of Katherine Moore, Club Stewardess, William Osler House.

**Mr Anthony P Bishop**, 25<sup>th</sup> March, Maintenance Worker, New College.

**Mr Matthew W Nimmo**, 27<sup>th</sup> March, Painter and Decorator, Jesus College.

**Mrs Rosemary E Littlehales**, 28<sup>th</sup> March, Librarian, Hertford College.

**Mr Allan J Selway**, 29<sup>th</sup> March, Lodge Porter, Green College.

**Mr Arthur Wilkins**, 30<sup>th</sup> March, widower of Iona Wilkins, Medical Laboratory Technician, Clinical Biochemistry.

**Mr Edwin G Bown**, 31<sup>st</sup> March, Medical Research Manager, Diabetes Research Laboratory.

**Mr Allan H Smith**, 31<sup>st</sup> March, Green College\*.

**Dr Laetitia Edwards**, 1<sup>st</sup> April, Faculty of Classics and Emerita Fellow of St Hugh's College.

**Mr Rex Tester**, 4<sup>th</sup> April, Steward, Keble College.

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**Dr John W Arden**, 6<sup>th</sup> April, Research Associate, Department of Earth Sciences.

**Mrs Pearl M Cherrill**, 14<sup>th</sup> April, Administrator, University Offices.

**Mrs Gurmej Kaur Gill**, 16<sup>th</sup> April, widow of Balwant Gill, Kitchen Porter, Hertford College.

**Mr Glen S Donald**, 24<sup>th</sup> April, Porter, Green Templeton College.

**Mr Roger A Every**, 27<sup>th</sup> April, Assistant Design Engineer, Department of Nuclear Physics.

**Mrs Doris M Hickman**, 27<sup>th</sup> April, widow of Leslie Hickman, Technician/Storekeeper, Clarendon Laboratory.

**Mrs Iva A Newbold**, 1<sup>st</sup> May, widow of Christopher Newbold, Bookbinder, Bodleian Library.

**Mrs Hildegard M Schult**, 2<sup>nd</sup> May, widow of Kurt Schult, Head Chef, Linacre College.

**Mrs Sylvia Morris**, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, widow of Alan Morris, Electrician, Magdalen College.

**Mr Melvin LL Palmer**, 8<sup>th</sup> May, Oxford Said Business School Ltd\*.

**Mrs Rosslyn M Carlisle**, 9<sup>th</sup> May, St Hugh's College\*.

**Mr Steven B Capper**, 13<sup>th</sup> May, Lodge Manager, Lady Margaret Hall.

**Mrs Betty W Garrett**, 19<sup>th</sup> May, Scout, Ruskin College.

**Mr David P Messer**, 19<sup>th</sup> May, Office Manager, Medical School Office.

**Mr Stephen H Slade**, 26<sup>th</sup> May, College Butler, Exeter College.

**Mr Lawrence P Cribben**, 2<sup>nd</sup> June, Technician, Department of Nuclear Physics.

**Mr William C Stafford**, 10<sup>th</sup> June, Worcester College\*.

**Mrs Rosemary J Key**, 11<sup>th</sup> June, Librarian, Taylor Institute.

**Mr Brendan O'Meara**, 11<sup>th</sup> June, Night Porter, St Anne's College.

**Mr Roger W Lewis**, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, Technician, Department of Engineering Science.

**Mr Michael Arnold**, 24<sup>th</sup> June, Senior Research Officer, Oxford Forestry Institute.

**Mr David L Smith**, 27<sup>th</sup> June, Clerk of Works, Wadham College.

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**THE ASSOCIATION OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY PENSIONERS  
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Do have a look at the website, and feel free to make suggestions about what you would like to see on the pages.

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/143862136306717>

Pictures of past trips can be found there, plus posts from members about their various hobbies and activities, including local walks and wildlife.

Front Cover: The Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities © David Bicknell  
Back Cover: Paddle Steamer on the Norfolk Broads © Bobbie O'Neill

