

## 2007 Festival to bring lasting benefits to Oxfordshire

A year-long festival for Oxfordshire in 2007. That's the ambitious plan Oxford Inspires is working to turn into a reality. Many of the ideas for the festival derive from the programme of consultation that went into Oxford's bid to become European Capital of Culture. According to Oxford Inspires' Chief Executive, Robert Hutchison, "It seemed both logical and exciting once the competition was over to translate our ambitions into a strong programme of work that made sense to all our stakeholders and had good public support."

### Internationalism, Participation and Innovation

Under the working title Oxfordshire International 2007, the planned year-long programme of events will be designed to capture the imagination of everyone who lives, works or studies in Oxfordshire as well as to appeal to visitors and tourists. Taking the key themes of Internationalism, Participation and Innovation, Oxfordshire International will build on and develop the many successful festivals and major cultural events already held in the County, as

Oxford Inspires works closely with the organisers of those festivals. In addition to supporting existing festivals, Oxfordshire International will also want to promote some major new events.

### Regeneration is key

The festival will enable Oxford Inspires to advance many of its objectives as a cultural development agency. Says Robert Hutchison, "Crucial to our plans for 2007 is the idea of regeneration through culture. Regeneration can take many forms – physical, economic, social and spiritual, and because regeneration is a continuing process, we are determined to ensure lasting benefits to Oxford and Oxfordshire as a result of the festival."

An important step on the road to 2007 will be the programme Oxford Inspires is developing for 2005. Called Evolving City, this will draw together city-based projects such as the plans for transforming Bonn Square, arts and learning initiatives on Oxford's outlying estates, science and environment activities and work with young



Henley Festival, 2003

people. Internationalism will be another important theme, with a focus on Oxford's twin cities and the work of artists from the EU Accession States – the new countries joining the EU in May 2004.

### A lasting legacy

Because it is hoped to secure funding from the new Urban Cultural Programme, the 2005 festival will be mainly – though not exclusively – focused on the city of Oxford. Oxfordshire International 2007 will be countywide. Common to both will be the aims of inspiring all who take part, widening and deepening involvement in cultural activity, strengthening cultural organisations, developing an appreciation of Oxfordshire's cultural diversity and spurring on improvements to the county's public spaces and buildings.

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## About Oxford Inspires

Oxford Inspires' purpose is to improve quality of life in Oxfordshire by widening participation in cultural activities, promoting festival culture, and strengthening cultural organisations across the County. Oxford Inspires encourages a broad definition of culture that includes the arts, scientific creativity, environmental concerns, sports and learning.

We have five stakeholders: Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Arts Council England, South East.

Our small staff is led by Chief Executive, Robert Hutchison. Our Board, chaired by Professor Paul Langford, reflects a wide range of interests in the city and county.

Find out more about us at [www.oxfordinspires.org](http://www.oxfordinspires.org).



Oxford Inspires' Festivals Working Group



## My Cultural Life – Hilary Lade

What cultural experience in your life has made the greatest impact on you? **Playing with my local youth orchestra, particularly a concert in the Musikverein in Vienna when I was 15.**

What is your favourite painting? **All young children's art for its spontaneity and uninhibited creativity.**

If you could have been responsible for one scientific invention, which one would it be and why? **The development of the internet for its fantastic communication opportunities world-wide.**

What does the word 'culture' mean to you? **Inspiration, involvement, people, sharing, opportunity, possibilities, excitement.**

Given a choice of any full-time career in the arts, what would you choose? **My "other life" would have been as a professional violin/viola player playing in bands and groups for jazz, folk, classical chamber music and community music.**

If as an Oxford Inspires board member you could change only one aspect of Oxfordshire cultural life, what would it be? **Involving and reaching more people, in more ways, in more places and more unexpectedly .**

**Hilary Lade** is a Trustee of the National Trust and former Managing Director of Shell's UK gas business. Recent public appointments range from Chairman of the Royal Parks to Director of the BTA/VisitBritain to Director of Southern Arts. She is a keen musician and textile designer and lives in Charlbury.

# Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the Oxford Inspires newsletter. The newsletter is designed to give you a clear picture of our work as a new cultural development agency for Oxford and Oxfordshire. In this, and future issues, we will introduce some of the many projects, partnerships and people with which we are involved.

Complementing our newsletter is our website, [www.oxfordinspires.org](http://www.oxfordinspires.org), which was relaunched earlier this year. We hope you will soon visit it, if you haven't done so already.

With so much happening, not least the ambitious festival plans for 2007 and 2005, which are described on page 1, there can be a danger of forgetting the main purpose of Oxford Inspires' existence – to make the inspirational power of art and culture available to everybody in Oxfordshire. That's why this issue includes a reminder – in the form of the answers of three new Oxford Inspires board members to our questionnaire, My Cultural Life – of the importance and diversity of cultural experience.

As we were going to press we were delighted to confirm two further additions to our Board – Junie James and Sharon Cosgrove. Junie, who works at the East Oxford Community Centre, was named Oxfordshire Woman of the Year in 2003. Sharon is Strategic Director: Physical Environment at Oxford City Council. Other recently appointed Board members are David Attwooll, Professor Linda Challis, Georgina Ferry, Hilary Lade and Yasmin Sidhwa.

We hope you enjoy reading more about who we are and what we do.

**Robert Hutchison**

Chief Executive, Oxford Inspires

# New website for Oxford Inspires

The new Oxford Inspires web site went live in March. At [www.oxfordinspires.org](http://www.oxfordinspires.org) you can find out more about our aims and activities, access news and information about our staff, board and stakeholder organisations and link to a wide range of cultural organisations in Oxfordshire. The new site also features an Opinion page, in which each month a leading figure on the Oxfordshire cultural scene will have their say on an issue of significance to the City and County.

The Oxford Inspires site was designed by Domino Systems. Founded in 1995 and based in Kingston Bagpuize, the company offers a wide range of web-based services. Says Managing Director, Nick Mayhew, "Although much of our work is with businesses, we are keen to use our expertise to benefit other kinds



of organisation. And we always enjoy the face-to-face contact that comes through working with local clients. So the opportunity to work with Oxford Inspires was doubly welcome."

For more information about Domino, visit [www.domino.com](http://www.domino.com). Oxford Inspires welcomes comments or suggestions about the new site, which should be sent to [info@oxfordinspires.org](mailto:info@oxfordinspires.org).

# Oxfordshire must raise its game, Tourism Conference told

Tourism in Oxfordshire must offer more worthwhile experiences to visitors. This was the clear message from the 2nd Oxfordshire Tourism Conference, which was held on 27th February. Organised by Oxford Inspires in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council, the conference brought together more than 70 representatives of tourist organisations from across the county.

Consumer behaviour is changing, Jan Siegieda of Bath Tourism Plus told conference delegates, with the customer's experience – rather than the brand – becoming the focus. Reflecting the customer point of view was Frank Barrett, Travel Editor of the Mail on Sunday, whose entertaining presentation drew on a recent visit to Oxford in which he sampled several of its best-known tourist attractions. His overall conclusion? Oxford is not enthralling visitors and needs to raise its game.



Broad Street, Oxford

Step forward the Oxford Marketing Group (OMG), which was established in 2000 with funding from Oxford City Council. Speaking on behalf of the Council, David Steel said, "One of the OMG's aims is to raise the profile and status of tourism in and around Oxford. With 80 members already, we feel we've made a useful start, though we know we still have plenty of work to do." To find out more about OMG contact Juliette Scott at [jscott@tourismse.com](mailto:jscott@tourismse.com). A report on the conference can be found on the Oxford Inspires website at [www.oxfordinspires.org/what-we-do-publications.html](http://www.oxfordinspires.org/what-we-do-publications.html).

## Working towards a Family Friendly future

With support from Oxford Inspires, several museums and arts venues are developing Family Friendly policies. What does this mean in practice?

At Oxford's University Museum of Natural History and the Pitt Rivers Museum, which have over two years' joint experience of running a Family Friendly scheme, the emphasis is on hands-on activities – often using real specimens such as shells or fossils – that families can do together. Asked how she would define "Family Friendly", Janet Stott, the Natural History Museum's Education Officer, said "Being accessible, friendly, welcoming, open and free".

Janet's experience is that Family Friendly activities do not have to be expensive – good news for smaller arts organisations. Even so, resources will be needed to maintain and develop the museums' existing work. "Advising us on our resourcing and



applying for grants is something we hope Oxford Inspires will be able to assist us with," commented Janet.

You can find out more about Family Friendly initiatives at the Natural History Museum and the Pitt Rivers by emailing Janet Stott [janet.stott@oum.ox.ac.uk](mailto:janet.stott@oum.ox.ac.uk) or Andy McLellan [andrew.mclellan@prm.ox.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.mclellan@prm.ox.ac.uk). For more information on Oxford Inspires' work to support Family Friendly initiatives in Oxfordshire, email [rachel.martin@sbs.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rachel.martin@sbs.ox.ac.uk).

## decibel raises the voice of culturally diverse arts



Oxford Inspires and Arts Council England (ACE) South East, together with the Racial Equality Council, local authorities and a number of arts organisations, were involved in bringing ACE's **decibel** roadshows to Oxford recently. The events, held at Modern Art Oxford on March 8th, and Pegasus Theatre on April 21st, highlighted the support ACE and Oxford Inspires can offer to Black, Asian, Chinese and Caribbean artists, and provided the opportunity for artists and arts and cultural organisations to network with each other. John Sailsman, Director of the Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council, said, "The contributions from the artists and main stakeholders involved were valuable and provided a fantastic platform for this work to continue in earnest."

Oxford Inspires is committed to making the cultural diversity of the city and county much more visible and ensuring it is fully celebrated in the festivals planned for 2005 and 2007. The roadshows were an important first step towards realising this ambitious goal. "We're pleased that Oxford Inspires have committed themselves to this process," commented John Sailsman, "It shows that the organisation is committed to working in a diverse cultural community."



Gelede Dance

## My Cultural Life – David Attwooll

What is your favourite piece of music?

**Desert Island Discs would include two Requiems – Mozart's, and Mingus's 'Goodbye Porkpie Hat'.**

If you could be really good at one sport, what sport would it be and what part would you play?

**Playing cultured cover drives, batting at no. 4 for Surrey.**

Have you ever performed in a cultural event?

**I've played drums in many jazz and rhythm & blues groups – from my early teens until a few years ago.**

What does the word 'culture' mean to you?

**Something growing & changing, in a creative, organic context.**

What's your favourite place to eat in Oxfordshire?

**Aziz, in the Cowley Road.**

If as an Oxford Inspires board member you could change only one aspect of Oxfordshire cultural life, what would it be?

**Making the rich, private and 'inward' cultural resources and energies here more public and accessible. I'd like to see better public (and private) spaces in the centre of the city full of cultural activities open to everyone, not just the cognoscenti and other pigeon-holing tribes. OOMF! and Artweeps are great positive examples.**

*David Attwooll is an Oxford-based publishing consultant. He held senior positions at Oxford University Press and Random House UK before founding Helicon Publishing Limited. He is Chair of Oxmedia Network.*

## Sustainable Institutions

Oxford Inspires' Sustainable Institutions working group has embarked on a series of seminars aimed at giving its local stakeholders the opportunity to share and develop good practice in environmental management. Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford were represented at seminars in February on Waste Management and in April on Sustainable Purchasing. Two further seminars, on Buildings and Transport, will take place in May and June respectively.

Professor John Glasson, Research Dean (Built Environment) at Oxford Brookes University, who chairs the working group, describes it as "a very useful and efficient forum for bringing together the four institutions to share good practice and explore opportunities for joint working in sustainable practice".

Already the first two seminars have highlighted many examples of good practice and identified over 20 ideas or opportunities for joint working in the future, such as using the free service of the Oxford Brookes Environmental Information Exchange website or producing a guide on sustainability for suppliers of goods and services. Costs are always a major consideration for any organisation, but by combining purchasing power, considerable savings can be made on more-sustainably-produced goods.

For advice and information on a range of environmental issues, and examples of best environmental practice, visit the Environmental Information Exchange website at [www.brookes.ac.uk/eie](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/eie).



Professor John Glasson

# Oxford Inspires contributes to Community Strategies

Oxford Inspires is playing an active role in two local government initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life of Oxford and Oxfordshire residents. Under the Local Government Act 2000, all local authorities have to prepare a Community Strategy for their area, with input from partners in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

Oxford Inspires is working with Oxford City Council and with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver their respective strategies. In both cases, a main aim of Oxford Inspires' involvement is to increase local participation in cultural and recreational activities.

In Oxford, where overall responsibility rests with the Oxford Strategic Partnership (OSP), Oxford Inspires is serving as a member

of the Partnership's Steering Group. Oxfordshire's strategy is the responsibility of the Oxfordshire Community Partnership (OCP), which has eight "Ambition Groups", each responsible for setting targets and driving action on a key issue, and reporting to the Steering Group. Oxford Inspires is the Ambition Group for Recreation, Culture and Leisure. Both the OSP and the OCP have now produced, and consulted on, the draft versions of their Community Strategies.

To find out more visit [www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk](http://www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk) and [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/index/aboutyourcouncil/communitystrategy](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/index/aboutyourcouncil/communitystrategy).



# Oxford Inspires expands its staff team

Two new staff recently joined Oxford Inspires. **Kathelene Weiss**, a native Texan, with a background in fundraising and special event management, and a degree in Fine Arts, joined in March as Director of Development. Her main role will be to develop the relationship between Oxford Inspires and private sector companies in Oxfordshire, with particular emphasis on identifying sponsors for Oxfordshire International 2007. Kathelene said, "The Festival will be an unprecedented opportunity for the celebration and recognition of all that Oxfordshire has to offer. I look forward to developing the relationships that will be crucial to the Festival's success."

**Rachel Viney**, the Communications Officer, has a background in broadcasting and media. A fan of contemporary painting and studio ceramics, Rachel was delighted to find a job where she could combine her communications skills and enjoyment of the arts. "I left my last job in television in order to study for an MA in European Cultural Policy and Administration at Warwick University," she said, "This job is a wonderful opportunity to put to work some of the skills I learned there, as well as to promote the county I've lived in for the past 14 years."

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## My Cultural Life – Georgina Ferry

What is your favourite piece of music?

**I like listening to many kinds of music but don't have a favourite.**

**As you haven't asked a question about theatre I'll say that my favourite play (not counting Shakespeare) is Arcadia by Tom Stoppard.**

If you could be really good at one sport, what sport would it be and what part would you play?

**Trampolining or high diving. I'm just amazed by the ability to perform all those twists and turns without losing track of where your body is in space.**

If you could have been responsible for one scientific invention, which one would it be and why?  
**Electricity, for without electricity we would not have the washing machine.**

What does the word 'culture' mean to you?

**The shared product of human imagination.**

Given a choice of any full-time career in the arts, what would you choose?

**I have a full time career as a writer and editor; with a bit more self-belief, I might have enjoyed the life of a theatre director.**

If as an Oxford Inspires board member you could change only one aspect of Oxfordshire cultural life, what would it be?

**To bridge the divide between the arts and the sciences, so that science is fully admitted into the cultural club.**

*Georgina Ferry is a science writer and broadcaster, and editor of Oxford Today, Oxford University's alumni magazine. She has lived in Oxford since 1981.*

# Consultancy Column

An important part of Oxford Inspires' work is providing free advice, training and consultancy services to cultural organisations across the county. Says Rachel Martin, Oxford Inspires' Executive Officer, "If your organisation could do with some external advice, or is struggling to find the money to bring in a consultant, we may be able to help."

Some of the projects Rachel has worked on to date have been:

- Assisting Pegasus Theatre with its capital lottery application, helping it to gain a grant of £2.7m from Arts Council England
- Helping Cowley Road Carnival with its development over the next three or four years, and strengthening its structure to ensure its long-term survival
- Advising architects Berman Guedes Stretton on their proposals for redevelopment of the Oxford Town Hall
- Negotiating the merger of Right Angle Productions and Fusion – Oxford's Community Arts Agency
- Running planning sessions with the members of the Oxford Family Friendly Arts Partnership, with a focus on future projects and services
- Helping Oxfordshire Youth Arts Partnership to make the transition from a local authority project into an independent arts organisation, and to create a new business plan.

Rachel has also provided advice on a one-off basis to numerous individual artists, promoters and small creative industries. If you would like to know more you can ring Rachel on 01865 278820. Oxford Inspires' advice, training and consultancy guidelines can be found on the website at [www.oxfordinspires.org/what-we-do-support.html](http://www.oxfordinspires.org/what-we-do-support.html).



*Pegasus Theatre celebrates its £2.7million lottery grant*