

Chair's Report to the Annual General Meeting 2015

Welcome to the 2015 Oxtalk Autumn Meeting.

I am pleased so many listeners are attending and 'thank you' to the volunteer drivers for being their 'chauffeurs'.

This has been an interesting year to say the least and one which I hope will never be repeated – certainly not whilst I am involved with Oxtalk.

I am not one to dwell in the past but I appreciate I have to report the year's events for this official report.

I mentioned at last year's AGM the possibility that Radio Cherwell and Oxtalk would have leave the Churchill Hospital site – OUHT wanted the land for a development opportunity. Thank you to those of you who, following the meeting, gave me the contacts for possible alternative organisations which had recording equipment and/or recording studios. All these were followed up.

OUHT did give Radio Cherwell notice to quit by the end of February 2015 and Neil Stockton gave Oxtalk notice to quit by 21 January 2015 , which we did – thank you to all the people who helped to clear out Oxtalk's accumulated property, some of which is still being held in various peoples' homes, rent free!

The last recording at Radio Cherwell was on 20 January and the last copying session on 21 January. Oxtalk was then silent until the relaunch on Tuesday 12 May. In the short time available the Committee checked out possible alternative sites and the discussions with Oxfordshire for the Blind [OAB] were proving to be the most promising. So in the intervening 4 months a decision was made to accept OAB's Trustees offer for Oxtalk to be based at Bradbury Lodge, one night a week. To comply with OAB's Insurer's requirements their staff and Trustees had to agree to either a member of staff or a Trustee being on duty each week. This they very generously agreed to.

As you will appreciate many things were going on in parallel:-

- the Technical Officers [TOs] visited DAWN for advice on the best recording equipment to buy; Oxtalk had no recording equipment having

been able to use Radio Cherwell's; we had copying equipment, pouches and memory sticks

- in future the reading/recording and copying would be taking place on a Tuesday night so we had to find out whether all the volunteers would be available on a Tuesday; this was not convenient for some volunteers and sadly we had to say thank you and good - bye to 5 people; fortunately articles in the Oxford Mail attracted the interest of a few new volunteers
- Bridget Doole offered to be the Listeners' Co-ordinator and we took this opportunity to re-organise the listener lists; the pouches needed re-addressing and new address cards were needed - Irene Read one of the Listener Representatives on the Committee asked for an address card of contrasting colours, as this would help listeners with partial sight know which side of the card was the return address side - green is now the return address side; thank you to Bridget, Irene and the volunteers who re-named the 300 address cards and pouches
- the new recording equipment was purchased and the TOs set about learning how to use it; it is similar but different from the equipment they had been using previously and it took a few weeks for all of them to learn how to use it; the quality of the recordings is because of the extra time given by the TOs; we are very fortunate to have a dedicated group of TOs
- Ray Anson offered to be the Volunteer Co-ordinator, she oversees the rotas, contacting new volunteers and the help she has given along with the help given by Bridget has meant there has been a shared work load and I have much appreciated their help
- all volunteers needed to visit Bradbury Lodge and be inducted into the new systems, using the new equipment and along with Colin Cure, Director of OAB, a few induction nights were held at OAB

Oxtalk restarted with a number of new listeners and has now been back in production for 6 months. I know listeners appreciate receiving the weekly news again as they let me know from time to time. In these 6 months the number of listeners has fluctuated as some no longer receive Oxtalk.

I have been told that Oxtalk should have stayed with Radio Cherwell as they are still in the old building but we had no choice. Many volunteers have told

me they really appreciate being at OAB, being in a warm comfortable building, being made to feel welcome and just this last week Caroline Ludden of OAB told me that she had received a similar message on OAB's facebook page and this pleased OAB. It pleases me too that 1 of Oxtalk's volunteers sent this unsolicited positive message to Colin and his staff, a message that will no doubt be passed on to the Trustees.

Oxtalk are making a small contribution towards the utilities that are used on a Tuesday night.

Those of you who attend other groups and clubs could suggest they ask Anne Ambler to give a talk about Oxtalk. You know about Oxtalk but perhaps not everyone at your club does.

I am very confident that Oxtalk's future is secure with the new partnership now established with OAB. Both organisations have a common purpose. We have a strong, reliable and supportive group of volunteers producing a weekly talking newspaper enjoyed by the listeners who receive it.

During these last few months I have been supported by an excellent group of Committee members and I appreciate the support given to me. My thanks to you.

I close by wishing Oxtalk a very positive, successful and calm 12 months.

Margaret A Simpson

Chair – Oxtalk

16 October 2015