



# Friends of Old Headington

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## CELEBRATING FIFTY YEARS

Next year sees the fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Friends of Old Headington. In 1959 people in the village became seriously alarmed to learn that Span, a large London development company, had bought the Churchill Farm site and two cottages, nos 2 and 4 in St. Andrew's Lane, from an absentee landlord. The site was immediately to the north of St. Andrew's Church and stretched further north giving a potential for 15 and possibly as many as 28 houses.

On 27<sup>th</sup> January a meeting was called which 74 people attended. Every street in the village was represented from Old High Street to St. Andrew's Lane and from Barton Lane to Dunstan Road. Two City Aldermen, and one or two who lived beyond, also came and gave support to the formation of a group to campaign against the development and aim to preserve the character of the village. A tremendous lot of activity followed, and by 27<sup>th</sup> April the first AGM of the Friends of Old Headington was held. Dr. A.B. Emden, Principal of St. Edmund Hall, was elected President with Sir Isaiah Berlin, Alderman Frank Pickstock and Jack Kingerlee, of the local building firm Kingerlee, as Vice-Presidents, and there was a paid up membership of 82: individuals paying a subscription of 2/6d and households five shillings.

Span made two planning applications. The first in 1960 was turned down by the City Council, the second, two years later, failed on the question of access because it involved the demolition of no 4 St. Andrew's Lane. The company appealed and lost after a tremendous and very hard working campaign. Not long after, Span decided to sell the land. The headlines in the local press read "The village which fought a giant and won".

Subsequently the village was recognised by the city as a Conservation Area and the Friends were able to comment on many small projects and larger developments such as the building of Laurel Farm Close, and the sale of the Priory land to build Emden House. We fought hard with the hospital to prevent the Ivy Lane entrance from being an alternative access onto Osler Road. The Friends became active, and continue to be active, on other fronts including planning applications within the village as well as lobbying the City Council about other concerns such as new lamp standards, unsightly posts and rails in Osler Road and damaged pavement curbing which is still a problem.

We would welcome ideas for the celebration of these fifty years as well as offers to join an *ad hoc* committee to organise whatever events are decided upon. Please get in touch with the Chairman, Sarah King, at 1 The Croft (phone: 763679) or the Secretary, with your suggestions.

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*President:* Mrs Penny Richards MBE MA    *Vice-President:* Ray Wilsdon Esq