

# EMMAUS Oxford

The newsletter of Emmaus Oxford

Spring 2004

## Community Site at 171 Oxford Road, Cowley

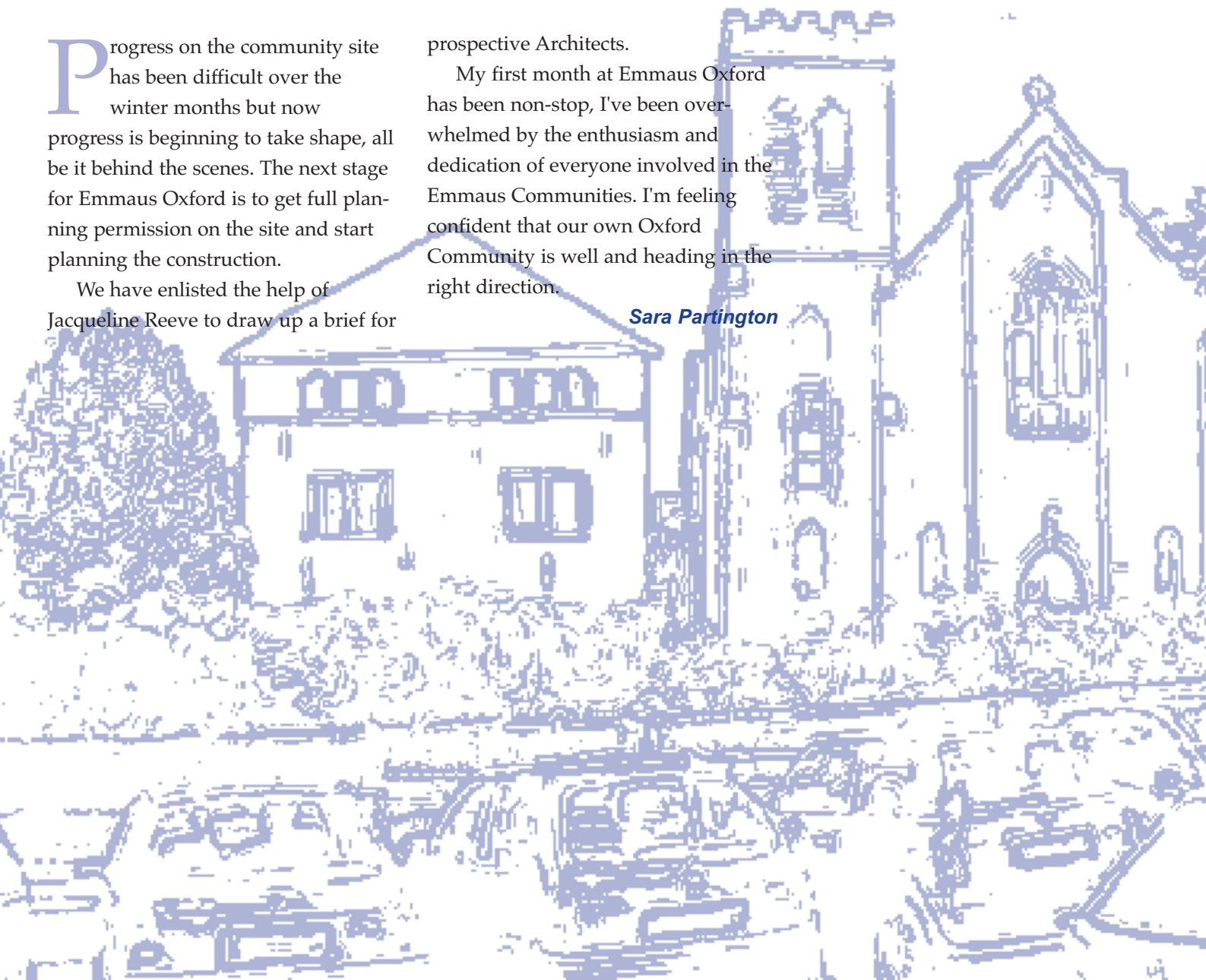
Progress on the community site has been difficult over the winter months but now progress is beginning to take shape, all be it behind the scenes. The next stage for Emmaus Oxford is to get full planning permission on the site and start planning the construction.

We have enlisted the help of Jacqueline Reeve to draw up a brief for

prospective Architects.

My first month at Emmaus Oxford has been non-stop, I've been overwhelmed by the enthusiasm and dedication of everyone involved in the Emmaus Communities. I'm feeling confident that our own Oxford Community is well and heading in the right direction.

*Sara Partington*



Giving people a bed... and a reason to get out of it



# Changes and progress



This newsletter has been somewhat delayed because we have been undergoing many changes.

David Faulkner has resigned as Chairman and as a trustee, as has his wife Maggie who was our first project director. Her successor James Harding has also moved on.

The trustees would like to put on record their gratitude to all of them for what they achieved in acquiring the site and the house, raising the initial funds, setting up the furniture business and getting the old Church Hall demolished ready for the Community building. It was all done with great commitment.

The Very Revd Robert Jeffery, former Sub Dean of Christ Church Oxford, has taken over

as chairman of the trustees.

While we were without a project director we received great help from Kieran Roche, a student at Bath University, who while on a student placement held the fort and kept the office going, we are very grateful to him.

Sara Partington started as our new project director on 26th January and is busy getting into the job. She comes with considerable administrative experience and used to work in casinos in Tanzania and New Zealand.

A fundraising committee has been organised and we welcome Hugh Crisp (Chief Executive of Freshfields) as its chairman. The other members of the committee include Charles Powell, John Steel, Michael Tarrant, Renny

Gye and The Very Revd Robert Jeffery, and helping us to get the major appeal established is Sandi Wilson.

We are anxious to get the capital funding in place over the next few months so that the building can be completed by the end of next year. This may sound very ambitious but many will know that Oxford has needed an Emmaus Community for many years and we need to progress as quickly as we can. We will keep you informed of developments and we will welcome any help you can give.

**'It is the self-respect, the dignity that's so important... you feel as though you have been put together again'**

*An Emmaus Companion*

## Furniture business overwhelms us

Over the last year we have run a busy business recycling furniture from a base in Upper Heyford.

The project has been managed by Len Higgins with the help of Geoff Wood and many people have benefited. We have also been able to supply furniture to other Emmaus Communities, firstly Leeds to help them open their shop and more recently to Bristol and Gloucester.

Unfortunately the storage space we have had is no longer available and we are having to put the work on hold while we find a new site.

It has been a very useful exercise and reveals that there is a real service to be provided in Oxford in this way.

## On Board

We would also like to welcome Jacqueline Reeve who is on secondment from Nationwide for two years.

Jacqueline has a vast wealth of experience within the building and housing industry and will be helping our project director with the Community building brief.

# A Night under the Stars

Oxford, the city of dreaming spires, can be a magical place, but it has a darker side. There are gaps between the spires where many homeless people live out their days in misery and their nights sleeping rough or in the night shelters, the shelters of the last resort.

These are the people we aim to help via the annual Oxford Sleep Out, which raises approxi-

mately £20,000 to £25,000 for local agencies providing succour and support for our homeless people.

November 22nd 2003 was my ninth sleep out. My job was to act as a site warden with the health and safety of 100 plus sleepers aged from 7 to 70 years as a priority.

Len and Geoff, who live at Emmaus House, and who run the furniture business, were

invaluable in delivering huge bales of blankets and plastic sheeting and they stayed on to cut up the much-needed ground-sheets.

Louise Powell, daughter of Charles, our Vice-Chair, joined us, as did Pieter Zwart, a faithful Emmaus Oxford supporter. Between us we raised £1,500 in sponsorship.

The whole event was exhilarating, fulfilling and rewarding for the sleepers, including a dozen of our homeless friends who came along to give us a few tips. Well Done, Team!



Jean Williams  
Emmaus  
Oxford Trustee  
and Sleep Out  
Warden

'It is more than a home; they are my family' – an Emmaus Companion

## Let me take you back about a month ago...

**Let me** take you back about a month ago, I was out on the streets with nowhere to go. I'd been let down by myself and by someone I know with uncertainty worrying me from top to toe.

**This year** for me has been a bit of a mess, psychologically and emotionally I've not been at my best. Falling out with my family was the main cause of my stress, and the constant daily boozing only made me depressed.

**Winter** was coming and I was still on the street, begging to get drunk and to have something to eat. I just wanted a chance to back back on my feet, and this alcohol problem just has to be beat.

**So I turned** to Emmaus and I am glad that I came, I told them I was homeless, they just asked for my name. They didn't judge me or get nosy or ask who was to blame. When I asked them for help they just asked for the same.

**Now I help** recycle furniture, (that's what we do), I see generous donating, by good people like you. We sell it off cheap, which helps other too, I now have a bed, a reason to get out of it and something to do.

**As I sit** on my bed writing this poem, I'm fine. I have a warm bed, good sobriety and something to do with my time. I know the last line of this poem doesn't rhyme,

**But I owe a lot of thanks to Emmaus!**

This poem has been reprinted from Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire's Spring newsletter

An Emmaus Companion



# What our Patrons Say

'Emmaus is about working together. Homeless people can support each other and rediscover their self-worth within a proper working Community which benefits everybody. It's a two-way deal – not just tea and sympathy.'

Graham Wynne,  
BBC Changing  
Rooms designer



'I know of no more worthwhile charity than Emmaus. It gives a sense of self-worth to people who previously lacked it; and it offers a practical, hard-working and self-sustaining solution to problems of homelessness. With your support, it can do even more.'

Martin Bell, Appeal Patron

## How can you help?

### Volunteers needed for just a few hours a week

Volunteers needed for data entry, gardening, general site clearance, lawyers, planning experts and quantity surveyors.

Contact Sara Partington on the office number 01865 402073 or email [emmausoxford@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:emmausoxford@tiscali.co.uk)

Yes, I am interested in the work of

# Emmaus Oxford

### I would like:

- More information on Emmaus Oxford
- To give a donation

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I enclose a cheque/voucher for £ \_\_\_\_\_  
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Account no. \_\_\_\_\_ Sort code \_\_\_\_\_

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