

## Do You Remember...

## The Litter Blitz

For several years lots of civic-minded Botley people dutifully turned out one weekend in Spring to clean up the rubbish around the parish. For a while the Parish Council co-ordinated our efforts, supplied the gloves and sacks and corralled and disposed of the results. Then there was a time when little pockets of private enterprise got the job done. My children and I raised a hundred pounds or so towards the costs of sending their father on the first delegation from Oxford to Leon in Nicaragua in 1981 by getting sponsored to clear the rubbish from the industrial estates around Old Botley. Another year my son raised enough money to replace his stolen bike. There was one grumbler who refused to sponsor him because it was not a 'proper' charity, but there aren't many ways a nine-year-old can raise a sum of money by his own efforts, and most people were just glad to get rid of the rubbish. The photo shows his pride in a job well done.



When the PC stopped co-ordinating the Blitz some of us just did it anyway. I remember toiling with that notable litter picker Linda Losito down the bank behind the bus stop opposite the George. Apart from the regulation shopping trolley we disinterred dozens of glasses, which we kindly returned to the pub – somehow they didn't seem entirely grateful! What Linda remembers is the hamburger boxes gnawed by rats. 'I kept them for ages, meaning to give them to the health inspector as evidence that McDonalds encouraged vermin, but in the end I just threw them away.' We conscientiously separated plastic and glass from the rest and recycled it, and still there were eight bulging sacks for the dustmen to take away.

And this leads me neatly to the Oxford Spring Clean coming up on March 5th and 6th. It is sponsored by Oxford City Council, Oxford Civic Trust and a number of other organizations, including McDonalds (an excellent initiative of Carl Room, who owns the franchise in Botley). The idea is that community groups, schools and businesses will demonstrate their sense of civic pride in their beautiful city by volunteering to spend two hours cleaning up their patch. I can't believe the people of Oxford have more civic pride than the people of Botley, so I dare say there are several plans already afoot to tackle our local litter. I know there's a gang from Cyclox, the Oxford Cycle Campaign, cleaning the bike track that runs past Botley School because I'll be in it. But if you hadn't heard about it, and would like to take this chance to clear some of our messier verges while trimming your waistline, there's still time to register online at <http://oxclean.oxfordcivicsoc.org.uk/SpringClean>

**Ag MacKeith**