

# The Otford Society NewsLetter

Registered with the Civic Voice  
Affiliated to the Campaign to Protect Rural England  
and the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies

[www.otford.info/offordsociety](http://www.otford.info/offordsociety)

**MARCH 2011**



Photo by Jeff Lee

## THE WAY AHEAD

The beginning of the New Year is well behind us, but the new decade is still very young. All the forecasts suggest that the next ten years will be difficult for the country's economy with only limited growth. Inevitably, Otford will be affected in one way or another. We hear how vulnerable libraries have become, which makes me wonder how secure the future of our local library is. Perhaps at some time in the next few years it will be run on a voluntary basis, as a village project – all part of the 'help yourself' idea. We still buck the national trend in having four successful pubs !

Otford is well placed to deal with a cloudy future. We have a spirited approach to community life, with all kinds of people doing worth-while activities. In a few months time the Parish Plan will be published. We shall be able to see to what extent our plan reflects the ideas David Cameron has projected. Will it reflect aspects of the Big Society? I anticipate that it will, because it seems to me that over the years, Otford has been and is a successful Small Society.

Turning to an issue which has hit the headlines recently; it was a relief to hear Caroline Spelman announcing in the Commons that the Coalition have made a U-turn, which means our forests and woodlands will not be sold off to private ownership. It would be pleasing to think that the letter sent by the Otford Society had some small part to play in this

Reflecting on a local issue: it's good to hear that the District Council is taking steps to deal with

## THE WAY AHEAD (cont)

the commuter parking in the roads around the station. Our roads are not public car parks! I have noticed on my 'walkabouts' that in roads like mine – where two cars are parked in close proximity – there would not be enough space down the middle of the road for a larger vehicle to pass through - for example, ambulances and fire engines. Pressure has to be brought to make us all more aware of WHERE and HOW we park our vehicles.

*(See article – People power to the Tudors – Ed)*

Several people have asked 'why can't we have grit boxes placed at strategic points during periods of severe snow and ice?' At times it was almost impassable to exit the side roads because the ice and snow were so severe. Let's hope that the Parish Plan will have some thoughts on this matter.

Spring is just around the corner. Sunshine and better weather will be on the way soon – I hope and there will be time to enjoy the garden and walking around Otford.

A.V. Wiltshire  
Chairman

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## Membership Secretary's Report 2010 - 2011

During 2010 the Society's total paid up membership was 1,131 and there are members present in 651 of the dwellings in the village, which is approximately half the total number of residences. This is a great achievement for a village amenity society, to have such a high level of membership, especially in this day and age of so many conflicting interests.

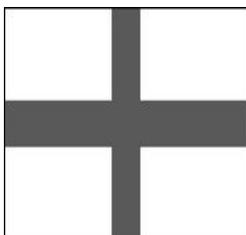
For this I thank you, our members, for your support, but especially the Liaison Officers, who deliver your newsletters and collect the membership subscriptions.

As you know, sadly, we lost a great worker and colleague, Andrew Barber, in February. He will be sorely missed, not least for his efforts in distributing the Newsletters to your Liaison Officers. Fortunately, Elisabeth Lindsay has volunteered to take over this role and we are very grateful to her for this.

Please try and remember to encourage your neighbours to join the Society, especially new residents moving into the area. It is important to maintain the high level of support we have in the village to add weight to any arguments we wish to put to local authorities on developments affecting our amenities or environment. This is particularly important at this time, with the development pressures from the government on the South East

Vincent Tilley  
Membership Secretary  
01959 522491

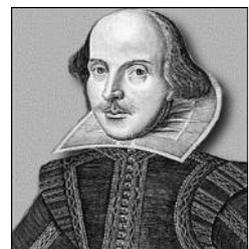
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### St George's Day Lunch

The St George's Day lunch will not be held this year.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> falls on Easter Saturday and it was felt that members could be away or with their families or friends on the Easter holiday weekend.





**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
of  
**THE OTFORD SOCIETY**  
on  
**Thursday 31 March 2011**  
**Otford Village Memorial Hall**  
**At 8.00pm**



**Speaker - Ed Thompson**  
**'The Way we Were - 1970's Otford'**

All members are invited to attend. The meeting is open to all who are interested in matters concerning our village

Newcomers to the committee are welcome. Nominations can be made in advance, or on the night, providing they have a seconder and the permission of the nominee.

President Ken Gunderson

Chairman	Tony Wiltshire
Treasurer	Derek Buck
Secretary	Carol Griffiths
Membership	Vincent Tilley
Newsletter Distribution	Elisabeth Lindsay
Traffic/Roads	Jeff Lee
Committee Members	Dennis Glasspool, Andrea Pinto



Minutes of 2010 AGM will be available at the meeting



## People Power in the Tudors

For those of you who live in roads close to the station, you will no doubt have noticed the gradual 'creep' of commuter parking. You wake up to find a commuter has parked outside of your house, and 12 hours later they are still there.....

Well, not for much longer. Last summer, the residents of Tudor Crescent and Tudor Drive became so fed up with the commuter parking nuisance and the resulting access problems for emergency vehicles that they decided to take action.

A resident of Tudor Drive leafleted the Tudors, and a meeting was held in the Scout Hut to discuss what action could be taken. More than 80 residents attended a very lively meeting. Our local councillor, Michelle Lowe, offered her support and subsequently persuaded Sevenoaks District Council to facilitate a formal consultation of the residents in the roads most affected.

This type of consultation normally generates a 15-20% response rate, but in this case nearly 60% of those consulted were in favour of a 1 hour parking restriction to deter all day parking.

The Sevenoaks District Council Joint Transportation Board will meet on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011 to make the final decision. Nick Chard our County Councillor is on the committee and supports this proposal which is expected to be enforced in the coming months.

The moral of the story is, if you want to make changes you have to be prepared to do something about it.

Andrea Pinto

## Treasurer's Report Year End 31 December 2010

The Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010 show a small loss of £40.35 compared to a surplus of £2525.41 for the previous year which did include a generous legacy of £1000.

The small loss for 2010 was due to some items of exceptional expenditure including a donation of £500 to the St Bartholomew's Tower Appeal, £345 for repairs to the mosaic, and £810 for Walks Leaflets which are held as nil value stock for sale in 2011 & 2012.

Our income generating activities were on target with a small increase in non donation income compared to 2009.

Despite this small loss our financial position is sound and we should return to surplus in 2011.

Derek Buck Treasurer

## Otford Village Fete

This year's fete will be held on Bank Holiday Monday 30<sup>TH</sup> May and we have chosen "Circus" to be the theme.

There will be a procession, which will leave Hale Lane at 11.00am, arriving at the Recreation Ground around 11.45am. Gates will officially open at 12noon and, as in previous years, entry will be just £1.00 per person (under 14s go free). If you would like to enter a float in the procession please email: [jackycot@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jackycot@hotmail.co.uk)

We are lucky in having Elands Veterinary Clinic run our Dog Show again this year. Always a very popular event, anyone wishing to enter should register at their stand at 12noon. The cost will be £2.50 per dog/bitch for each class. A full schedule of categories will appear on our website in early May.

We will have live music throughout the afternoon as well as numerous stalls, rides and attractions. A copy of the programme will be made available on our website a week prior to the fete.

There will be a selection of different food outlets including a BBQ organised by Otford Scouts. Afternoon tea will be served in the village hall.

[www.otford.info/villagefete](http://www.otford.info/villagefete)



## Would you like to join Neighbourhood Watch?

Despite Otford being a low-crime area, our community does still experience some crime. It's easy to assume that it won't happen to you or that nothing can be done. In fact, a great deal can be done to prevent crime. But the Police cannot do it alone.

Each of us has a vital role to play by becoming actively involved in crime prevention. You, as residents of our community, possess a very specialised knowledge of your neighbourhood, which even your local neighbourhood policing team (PCSO Jane Wright & PC Brian Smith) may find hard to achieve. For example, they might not recognise someone in your garden as a stranger, but your neighbours might. It is this kind of awareness & willingness to help that is the basis of Neighbourhood Watch.

Neighbourhood Watch does not only deter crime, it can also bring residents together and create



communities that care. The activity of neighbourhood watch members can foster a new community spirit, whilst knowing that your neighbours are keeping an eye on your property

### **What do I need to do?**

Firstly, speak to your neighbours to see whether they are interested in having a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your road as well. This is a good place to start. You only need a few enthusiastic people to get things up and running. Neighbourhood Watch schemes can be large (covering a whole estate) or they might just cover a dozen or so houses. It depends on the area and what people living there want.

A scheme is generally led by one or two co-ordinators, who receive information from us about crimes in the area, crime prevention advice, and information from your Neighbourhood Policing team (PC Brian Smith and PCSO Jane Wright). It is then up to them to get this information out to the other members of the scheme (this is all mostly done on email, but this is not always the case).

### **What are the benefits for me?**

Not only will you be kept up-to-date with things going on in Otford, but it will make you feel safer, knowing that you and your neighbours are supporting each other.

Before going on holiday, many people ask their neighbours to keep an eye on their homes while they are away. But just how much more confident you would feel if you knew that you and your neighbours were looking after each other's homes throughout the year? This is what Neighbourhood Watch means. Neighbourhood Watch schemes lead to a greater shared awareness of the problems in your community and to a better understanding of the practical steps that can be taken to tackle these.

It's also good to remember that it is often possible to get a discount on your home insurance when part of Neighbourhood Watch.

**If you would like to know whether your road is included in a scheme, or if you are interested in setting one up where you live, please contact Suzanne Daniell on 01732 379 373 or email her at [suzanne.daniell@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:suzanne.daniell@kent.pnn.police.uk)**

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## The Otford Society and Civic Voice



Just as you are a member of the Otford Society, so the Otford Society is a member of Civic Voice. Civic Voice was born recently out of the ashes of the Civic Trust and is proving to be active, practical, helpful and non-bureaucratic. In its own words: "Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement in England. We make places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. We promote civic pride." Civic Voice keeps us posted on things like the Localism Bill and how it might affect us. It runs numerous campaigns and projects including currently Big Tree Plant, Broadband boxes, Campaign partners, Love Local, Civic Day and Street Pride.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2011 is designated Civic Day: the idea is to get lots of groups like ours involved on or around that date with local activities such as a Street Clutter Survey or a Photograph the Village week. This will give the movement national publicity and also – it is hoped – get many young people actively involved. Should we do something – a photography week for young people, or a street clutter survey? Send your views to our Secretary, Carol Griffiths at [carolgriffiths@waitrose.com](mailto:carolgriffiths@waitrose.com)

- AND visit Civic Voice at [www.civicvoice.org.uk](http://www.civicvoice.org.uk) for more information and ideas.

Jeff Lee

## CPRE - Protect Kent Outings

As a Society we are affiliated to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and its Kent branch 'Protect Kent'.

Protect Kent also organise outings to various places during the year and all our members are entitled to join in. These ranged last year from a trip to a jam factory, a horse drawn barge trip, a visit to Butterfly World in St Albans to a nuclear bunker in Essex ! Quite a diverse choice.

This year the trips are also a mixed bunch.

There are trips to **Chilham Castle** on **12 May, 17 May, 28 June & 27 July**. Cost £13.00.

A visit to **Hampton Court Flower Show** on **Thursday 7 July** by coach. Price details on application.

Coach tour of the **Olympic site** and a boat trip through the Lee Valley River Park from Broxbourne on **Tuesday 18 August**. This will include a guided tour around the Olympic site areas, lunch at Waltham Abbey and then to Broxbourne for the boat trip through the Lee Valley Park for an hour and a half cruise, with cream tea laid on. Cost approx £30-40.

Visit to **EU Parliament in Brussels** on **Thursday 13 October**. This is a day trip and would mean leaving Charing, Kent at 7am. This one is for early birds only !

Visit to the **College of Arms**, City of London on **17 November**. The college has records going back 800years and Windsor Herald will take you into the Record Room to inspect these. He also gives a description of the activities and history of the College and a buffet meal is served. The tour begins at 6.15pm and ends at 9pm. Cost is £30.

If you are interested in any of these trips – please contact Margaret Micklewright, at Protect Kent, Queens Head House, Ashford Road, Charing, Kent TN27 0AD Phone 01233 714540  
email : [info@protectkent.org.uk](mailto:info@protectkent.org.uk)



### **Dates for your Diary**

30 May	Annual Village Fete	Theme	Circus
25 June	St Bartholomew's Fair	2pm	Castle House
2 July	Offord Society Garden Party		Broughton Manor
20 October	Offord Society Autumn Meeting		Memorial Hall
19 April 2012	Offord Society AGM		Memorial Hall

# HOW THE LOCALISM BILL HELPS OTFORD

Michael Fallon MP for Sevenoaks



The Localism Bill has 207 clauses but the principle is simple: local people should have more of a say in what happens to their area. How will it work in practice for villages like Otford?

Otford residents will now be able to define exactly what kind of developments they would like to see in the area, by drawing up a 'neighbourhood plan.' If an Otford Neighbourhood Plan is then passed by a referendum, Sevenoaks District Council will have a duty to adopt it into its planning framework.

Also in the Bill is a new community 'right to buy,' which effectively allows local groups to bid for public and private assets of community value, such as old buildings, pubs or shops. This is coupled with a community 'right to challenge.' If the Otford Society, the Parish Council or any other voluntary group believe they could better manage council-run services, then Sevenoaks District Council must consider their proposals.

More generally, people will now be able to initiate a referendum on any local issue. The results will not be binding but must be factored into council decisions.

Some planning enforcement loopholes are also closed; perhaps most importantly, unauthorised developments will no longer be able to apply for retrospective planning permission. If any very large developments are proposed in Otford, residents will have to be consulted before, not after, a planning application is made to the Council, giving local people a much earlier say.

A greater proportion of Community Infrastructure Levies will also be returned to Otford from Sevenoaks District Council. These revenues could be put towards anything from cycle paths and benches to playgrounds. The Government plans to publish a framework to replace existing planning guidance early in 2012.

Central government has paid lip-service to community decision making for far too long. This is, at last, a real recipe for change and should reinvigorate local democracy. I look forward to the first Otford referendum !

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## Alastair Smith 1921 - 2011

Alastair Smith, formerly of Well Road, died a few days before his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, in Bournemouth in February. Sadly his daughter, Sandra, arrived from New Zealand just a few hours too late to see him.

Many in Otford will have good memories of Alastair. He spent most of his married life here and it is where his family grew up.

He was invalided out of the RAF in 1940 at the age of 19, when a hearing test went wrong. This left him profoundly deaf and resulting in him having to wear a hearing aid for the rest of his life. Despite this handicap, he joined in many village activities and will be especially remembered at the Methodist Church where he was a member of the Regnal Circle. We all became accustomed to seeing him pushing Doris, his wife, around the village in her wheelchair after her dreadful accident in which she nearly lost her life.

Alastair worked in the London office of 'The Scotsman'; his father and grandfather had both worked for that newspaper. He moved with Doris to the South Coast some 10 years ago and leaves his wife Doris, who is now in a care home, four daughters and eight grandchildren. Doris and his four girls would be delighted to see or hear from any of his old friends. Please contact Debbie on 01622 203952 or [debbie.holland@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:debbie.holland@blueyonder.co.uk)

He requested that any donations go to the R.N.I.D.

Ken Gunderson

## Andrew Barber (1928 – 2011)

It was with great sadness that we heard that Andrew Barber died in the Hospice in the Weald on 8 February 2011. He and Brenda his wife, came to live in Otford over 50 years ago, and where their two sons grew up and attended the local school. For most of his working life Andrew worked as a chartered quantity surveyor, but before he retired he ran his own DIY business.

Andrew was a long time member of the Otford Society and had been on the committee for the last twenty years. Not only will he be a great loss to the Society, but also to the village for which he had a strong affection. He was a keen supporter and key-holder of the Heritage Centre and took regular turns in welcoming visitors.

In Well Road, where he lived, he was looked upon as the local 'Mr Fix-it', always ready to help with domestic problems or giving advice on neighbour's cars. He had always serviced his motor-caravan and his pride and joy, his sports car. He enjoyed gardening and even last year was seen climbing a large tree in order to prune it.

Every organisation hopes to have such a person as Andrew Barber on its committee and the Otford Society was fortunate to have him for itself. His actions often spoke louder than words. Under his direction, the Newsletter' distribution operated seamlessly and the sales of the 'Walks Leaflets' steadily replenished the Society's coffers. His honest judgement and quiet manner were valued by all who knew him. He will be remembered as a good, honest and respected man. Our thoughts and condolences are with Brenda, his loyal supportive wife, and his two sons.

A.V. Wiltshire

## David Thomas 1930 – 2010

On 6 November last year, a thanksgiving service, for the life of David Thomas, was held in St Bartholomew's Church.

David and his wife, Audrey, came to Otford in 1959, just after they were married. Although he studied architecture, David was also very interested in engineering. Later he trained to be a secondary school teacher, where he specialised in teaching children with special needs.

We remember David for giving Otford its own model of the Solar System – the only one of its kind in the world. He later published a book about it. His interest in astronomy plus his highly fertile imagination have left us with a unique and lasting legacy.

David was a supporter of the Otford Society and had taken a keen interest in the efforts we have made to deal with traffic issues. He will be sadly missed by the whole village.



### Subscription Rates

Senior Citizen	£2	Senior Citizen (Joint)	£3
Adult (Single)	£4	Adult (Joint)	£5

*Next Otford Society Newsletter – June 2011*

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