



The Otford Society

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Summer 2014 Newsletter

Otford Society Garden Party - Saturday 19th July

Full details on page 3!

A Message from the Chairman

Firstly, can I thank the previous chairman Tony Wiltshire, secretary Carol Griffiths, and committee members Jeff Lee and Dennis Glasspool for their tireless work on behalf of the society for many years; they will be a hard act to follow.

I have lived in Otford since 2004, coming here after living for 23 years in Petts Wood, where I ran several boys' football teams over a 10 year period and was secretary to the Scout group. I retired from full time employment in 2013 and when I saw that the Society needed a secretary I volunteered to help in January 2014 - by April 2014 I was honoured to become chairman. I have to thank Ted Scott who willingly took over the role of secretary to allow this.

Soon after joining the Otford Society committee in January, I attended a meeting of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies (of which Otford is a member) and heard John Walker (their chairman) speak about the new direction for Civic Voice and the Federation. They have prepared a 'manifesto' to take to the party conferences this year, to influence the main political parties' own manifestos of what they will do in government, on the basis that prevention is better than cure. Amongst seven main topics, key points included the support for new garden cities as opposed to infilling/extending villages, and obtaining a community right of appeal against planning approvals. It convinced me that there is a much bigger rôle for the Society to play, both within the village and on wider issues in order to protect the village, and I urge you all to look at the Civic Voice website at www.civicvoice.org.uk

I have been impressed with the dedication of our committee who, under the leadership of Derek Buck our Treasurer, set up and ran the Society stall at the village fête - which took almost as much money as last year, despite the rain.

We currently have vacancies on the committee and are looking for volunteers. The rôle is not onerous (you can do as much or as little as you are able, and have fun on the way). It would mean attending six 1½ hour meetings each year, and giving an hour or two to help with events such as the fête, garden party etc. Please get in touch if you would like to know more: chairman@otfordsociety.org.uk We also have some new initiatives that we would like to explore such as environmental issues, including pollution levels on the High Street. Help us to protect and improve our lovely village.

The other unsung heroes of the Society are our liaison officers, without whom our membership numbers would dwindle, our funding would dry up and you wouldn't have received this copy of the newsletter. The team could always use a bit more help, so if you can spare a little time, please contact membership@otfordsociety.org.uk to find out more.

The committee would like to broaden the Society's appeal across the village, and across all age ranges, by adding to our current social event calendar of St. George's Day Lunch and Summer Garden Party. We are exploring a number of ideas including an Easter Egg hunt for the first age, and a Christmas Party with live music for the second and third ages.

I hope you all enjoy the summer, and look forward to meeting you at our forthcoming events.

Keith Gofton, Chairman

About Us

The Otford Society is an amenities charity specialising in preserving the rural character of Otford by monitoring planning and development activities, and improving the quality of Otford village life by providing funding to improve village amenities.

We are always looking for projects to fund which will meet the above goals. To submit an idea, please email otfordsociety@otford.net

Twinning



On the weekend of 6th - 8th June, eighteen members of the Otford-Neufchâtel-Hardelot Twinning Association paid a visit to our "Twins".

A very full programme had been arranged for us, starting at the Golf des Dunes with their monthly aperitif, enhanced with enticing canapés, where we met many members of the French Twinning Association and were received most cordially. On Saturday morning, we were up early to board the coach for Arras. Throughout the journey (about an hour and a half) we were given a most extensive and thorough explanation of the origins of World War I by an excellent translator. We then visited the Wellington Quarries, where we were given an English-speaking guide, audio commentaries and British Tommies' steel helmets to wear (compulsory).

These are historic limestone quarries whose tunnels 20 metres underground were adapted and further excavated by tunnellers from the New Zealand Division and the British Army (many of whom were ex-miners or chosen for their small stature). They were dug under the German lines enabling a surprise attack to be made in the Arras offensive in April 1917. About 600 men lived, worked and slept here and there are touching exhibits of their letters home, tiny models made from matchboxes and drawings in the chalk face. Thousands of men were accommodated in the tunnels for six days prior to the battle. This was a well-explained, informative and poignant experience.



In Lorette we were entertained with a substantial and delicious three course lunch, finishing with a vast gâteau appropriately iced to celebrate the Twinning occasion and crowned with two slow-burning candles.

We then visited the Necropolis and Basilica of Notre Dame de Lorette which commemorates around 45,000 French soldiers who died in one of the most fiercely-contested battles of WW1. The large chapel was designed by Louis Marie Cordonnier who was responsible for most of the old villas in Hardelot. The next stop was the Canadian/British cemetery at Cabaret Rouge which is beautifully designed, immaculately cared-for and situated on a gently sloping hillside - now a peaceful resting place.

The final destination was the Canadian Memorial at Vimy Ridge, a strategic position held by the Germans but taken by the Canadian Expeditionary Forces and the British in 1917. This is a huge monument built in dazzling white stone, inscribed with the names of the fallen and visible from many miles away in the plain.

On Sunday, people spent time with their hosts in Hardelot and the locality before returning to England in the late afternoon. We were received with great warmth and kindness and could see how much time and effort had been given to the organisation of the visit. It was a memorable and moving weekend. They even organised good weather!



If you would like to join us and take part in such exchanges you would be most welcome.

You do not need to speak French or offer hospitality. The next social meeting of the Association will be at the Woodman on Monday 29th September from 7.45pm. Before that, "Les Boucles d'Hardelot", a running race (10km for adults and 1km/2km for children) will take place at 4pm on Saturday 6 September in Hardelot; there is a special Twinning Cup to be won by an Otfordian with prizes for all competitors. We are also planning another coach trip to Hardelot on Saturday 11 October for a Franco-Anglo day with some hypermarket shopping. Please contact Jane Lawrey via (01959) 522360 or kl@lawrey23.freeserve.co.uk for further details.

Charmian Marsh

Otford Society Summer Garden Party



This year's Summer Garden Party will take place on Saturday 19th July, between 6pm and 8pm. Like last year, which was our most popular and successful party ever, this year's event will be held in the grounds of Russell House School, Station Road (opposite Otford Station). As well as providing a beautiful setting for the party, Russell House School offers an extensive play area to occupy younger guests, and around forty parking spaces to accommodate those who wish to drive.

Entrance is by ticket only, with tickets available now from The Mad Hatter's Emporium at 8 High Street, Yvonne's Newsagent in

Telston Lane, and the Otford Parish Office in the High Street. The cost is just £6 per adult (17 or over) or £3 per child (6-16), with infants under 6 free. The ticket price includes one free glass of wine or soft drink, and complimentary canapés. All profits from ticket sales will contribute to the Society's fund for village improvements; last year we raised over £500!



A prize raffle will also be held, with all proceeds donated to The Kent Air Ambulance and Friends of Ifield (a local school for the disabled) - two local charities chosen by the shops kindly selling our tickets.

We hope that you will be able to attend this year's party, enjoy meeting fellow members and the Committee, and in doing so support some worthy causes. If anyone would like to help out, perhaps by contributing additional refreshments, then please contact distribution@otfordsociety.org.uk

Elisabeth Lindsay, Newsletter Distributor

Friends of Otford Medical Practice

We have formed a group to raise funds to provide extra facilities for all the patients of the Otford Medical Practice. Our first project is to provide specialist higher chairs with arms to aid patients who have mobility difficulties. We would like one for each doctor's consulting room in both the Otford and Kemsing surgeries, as well as one for each waiting room.

If you would like to help by joining our fund-raising group, donating to the project, or suggesting future initiatives then email judy@cardinals.co.uk or call 522513.

Our first fund-raising event will be a fun quiz on Friday September 19th at St. Edith's Hall in Kemsing. If you would like to take part (on a table of eight) then please contact us for tickets.

Judy Cardinal

Foal Farm Country Festival Day

For more than fifty years, Foal Farm Animal Rescue Centre has been working to help animals of all shapes and sizes - from rabbits and guinea pigs, through cats and dogs, to pigs, goats and horses.

On Sunday 20th July, from 11am to 5pm, Foal Farm will host its annual Country Festival Day, including a dog show and other arena events, children's rides and games, food stalls and a beer tent, plus live music and entertainment.

A day out for all the family, entry costs £5 per vehicle or £1 on foot. Foal Farm is located in Jail Lane, Biggin Hill, TN16 3AX. Please support this local charity and, if you can, give an abandoned animal a new home. Find out more at www.foalfarm.org.uk

Phil Chapman

Hospices of Hope Events



hospicesofhope

• Otford Quiz Night

Friday 11th July 2014 at 7pm
Otford Tea Rooms

£12 per person to include a light supper.

To book, contact Carole Ford via carole@hospicesofhope.co.uk or 525110.

• The Spartan Race

Join Team Bagpuss at the world's leading obstacle race series 'The Spartan Race' and help support our vital work with terminally ill children in Romania.

We ask you to raise a minimum of £150 sponsorship per person; in return you gain race day entry, a team Bagpuss T-shirt, a finishing medal and race day hospitality.

The event takes place at Pippingford Park, Nutley, East Sussex

30th August 2014: Spartan Sprint 5km with 15+ obstacles

31st August 2014: Super Spartan 13km with 21+ obstacles

We recommend you do this challenge with a team to help you complete The Spartan Race, but you can also enter individually.

For more information or to sign up for the race, please contact Anna Perolls via anna@hospicesofhope.co.uk or 525110.

Let's bring out your inner Spartan!

• An evening with Ottovoci and Friends

Saturday 27th September 2014 at 7.30pm
Otford Methodist Church Hall, High Street, Otford

Ottovoci are four local couples who like to sing together. They are delighted to be performing for Hospices of Hope in Otford again, after their sell out concert last year in the church hall.

They will be singing a varied programme, including popular and sacred music and much more.

Tickets are £12 per person, including interval refreshments of tea/coffee and homemade cakes.

To book, contact Anna Perolls via anna@hospicesofhope.co.uk or 525110.

The Committee

President:	Ken Gunderson
Chairman:	Keith Gofton chairman@
Treasurer:	Derek Buck treasurer@
Secretary:	Ted Scott secretary@
Membership Secretary:	Vincent Tilley membership@
Newsletter Editor:	Phil Chapman newsletter@
Newsletter Distribution:	Elisabeth Lindsay distribution@

*Also: Andrea Kelly
Penelope Winter*

Committee members can be emailed individually using the addresses shown above, @otfordsociety.org.uk

We are currently searching for new committee members - please contact us if you would like to help.

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 5th July, midday-3pm
Summer Fête at Otford Primary

Saturday 19th July, 6pm-8pm
Otford Society Garden Party

Monday 25th August
Bank Holiday

Thursday 16th October
Otford Society Autumn Meeting

*To list events in the next newsletter,
email newsletter@otfordsociety.org.uk*

We are pleased to report that the Otford Society's "Wheel of Fortune" stall at the village fête raised £264, of which £106 will be donated to the fête committee. Many thanks to everyone who came along and supported us!

Annual Subscriptions

Adult (Couple)	£5
Adult (Single)	£4
Retired Couple	£3
Retired Single	£2

The Otford Society

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Affiliated to the Campaign to Protect Rural England

Registered charity 272974

Next Newsletter: Autumn 2014