Otford Christmas Shopping Festival

Despite the terrible weather as the shops opened people still came in large numbers to enjoy all the fun of the day. A huge thank you once again to all the shopkeepers and pubs who took part in this special day. We hope that it was successful for you all. Lots of people enjoyed the opportunity to browse around and buy from our lovely shops and enjoy the entertainment provided in the High Street with the Scouts roasting chestnuts and providing welcoming mulled wine, Morris dancing, Father Christmas and his big basket of sweets, members of the Methodist Church giving away mince pies, the Otford Art Group in the Village Hall, Bobbo the clown doing his balloon magic and Rob the fantastic fire juggler. Well done to everyone.

Guide Christmas Post

This year will be the 25th year of the Guide Christmas Post when Guides and Brownies will deliver Christmas Cards in Otford Village. The stamps have been designed this year by the Rainbows, Brownies and Guides and all the proceeds will be divided between Hospice in the Weald and Valence School Children’s Wish List. The Post Box will be in Otford Library between Monday 26th November and Tuesday 18th December inclusive during opening hours. A second box will also be available in the Parish Council Office on Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 12 noon between the same dates. Stamps will be 20p per card and all the money will go to the chosen charities. Please support us by posting early and make this 25th year a great success.

Police Surgery

The next Police Surgery with our PCSO Dave Birchall will take place on Thursday 20th December between 11am and 12.30pm at School House. Please come and see him if you have any problems. Dave reminds you to be aware of the following so that criminals don’t enjoy their Christmas at your expense.

- Keep your presents out of sight in your car and house. If they can be seen they can be stolen. Keep curtains pulled.
- Always close windows and lock all doors when going out and check car is also locked.
- Park in a well-lit area or an attended car park.
- If going away, consider using timer switches, cancel milk and papers and ask a neighbour to keep an eye on the house.
- Only open your door after identifying the caller.
- Do not keep large amounts of cash at home or carry large amounts of cash around with you.
- If you are offered a quality product at a bargain price ensure the source is genuine.
- In an emergency always dial 999
- To confidentially report information about crime call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111
- The number for Sevenoaks Police Station is 01732 771055

Young Achiever Award

There is still time if you think there is a youngster out there who deserves recognition please let us have your nominations as soon as possible. The award will now be presented at the January Parish Council Meeting on the 14th January at 7.30pm in the Club Room of Otford Village Memorial hall

Personal Alarms

A small quantity of personal alarms provided by the Sevenoaks District Community Safety Partnership, are available free from School House when the office is open.

Tree of Light

The Tree of Light service took place on Friday 7th December on the Village Green and was followed with the traditional United Churches Carols around the Christmas tree on the Green. Seasonal refreshments followed these events in the new St Bartholomew’s Church Centre.

Labels for you to write your message on are still available from the Parish Council Office. If you
cannot get into the office during opening hours (8.30am - 12.30pm) then please phone up and we will write your card for you. Cheques for your donation need to be made out to Otford Parish Council. The Tree of Light will remain lit up until after the New Year. Donations will once again be going to The Hospice in the Weald.

Otford Village Information Online

www.otford.info

If you are having an event in Otford and wish to publicise it on the web, just click on the interactive Event Calendar and enter the details. The Village Gallery now contains many old pictures of Otford (courtesy of the Historical Society) though the pubs are the pictures most viewed! Please do register and upload your own village favourites and comment on those there. You can also view (and search) Village News and many of the Otford newsletters circulated (including this one) are on the website. Why not submit your own news item too!

Contact Otford.net (522822) to join other families in the village and have a unique e-mail address of your.name@otford.net. The price is £12 per year with 50% going towards an Otford Community Fund distributed regularly to Otford village amenities. A family (max 6) can all sign-up for just £20 p.a. More details @ www.otford.net. Last year the scheme fund contribution provided waste paper re-cycling bins for the Otford schools, churches, library and Parish Office and has now raised over £500.

A comprehensive online Village Directory is being planned and any suggestions for its and other content are very welcome - contact info@otford.net.

Boxing

Keep letting us have your names if you would be interested in joining a boxing club based in The Weald. If you are aged between 10 - 17 years please let Sue at the Parish Council Office know your details on 01959 524808. We have eight names now so we will be contacting you all who have shown an interest in the New Year to arrange a visit. Thank you

Otford Oast WI

Start the New Year with a Bang in Otford Village Hall on Thursday 17th January 2008 when Mary Forlenza 'a very funny lady' will be talking to the Oast WI about 'Great Lovers'. Do join us. The meeting starts at 9.30am. There is a crèche and the first visit is free.

Parking Leonard Avenue

It is appreciated by the police that it is an unfortunate necessity to have to park on the pavement on one side of the road. However, please do so with consideration for other residents and leave enough room on the pavement for pedestrians and buggies to get past.

Parking Bull Car Park

After a number of complaints and concerns re safety please do not use the car park at the Bull PH in the morning or afternoon when dropping children off or picking up at the Primary School. Large vehicles need to access the car park at those times. Thank you

Otford Methodist Church Services

• Sunday 16th December at 10.30am - Christmas Nativity Family Service - in the Hall.
• Sunday 23rd December at 6.30pm - Carols by Candelight - A traditional Carol Service with Candelit atmosphere - in the Church
• Monday 24th December at 5pm - Christingle Service - loved by children and adults - we remember Jesus the Light of the World - in the Hall
• Tuesday 25th December at 10.30am - Christmas Day Service for all the Family - in the Hall

Join them for worship any Sunday at 10.30am including crèche, groups for children and young people

Otford Heritage Centre/ Parish Council

From Saturday 22nd December to Friday 4th January, the Heritage Centre will only be open on weekday mornings when the Parish office is open. Normal weekend/bank holiday opening resumes on 5th January 2008. The Parish Council office will reopen after Christmas on Thursday 27th December and then again after the New Year on Wednesday 2nd January. Full details will be posted on the office window.

St Bartholomews Church

Annual Carol Concert

St Bartholomew's Church Annual Carol Concert will be held in the church on Sunday 16th December at 7.30pm. Admission is £5 for adults (children under 16 free) with proceeds going to the Choir Fund and
The Children's Society. Food and drink will be supplied during the interval. This year's event will also celebrate the use of the new Church Centre which includes refreshment rooms, vestry, Parish office (for the first time in a 900 year history, running water and toilets). The concert is an informal occasion and the choir directed by Kevin Grafton, will perform a wide range of carols both traditional and modern with arrangements from across Europe, some of which will be unaccompanied items.

Christmas/New Year Travel Details
Seventeen Bus Station - 01732 743040

Buses
Dec 25th - No service
Dec 26th - No service
Dec 27th - Saturday service
Dec 28th - Saturday service
Dec 29th - Saturday service
Dec 30th - No service
Dec 31st - Saturday service
Jan 1st - No service
Jan 2nd - Normal service

Trains

(Check at the Station or South Eastern Customer Services on 0845 000 2222) or see www.southeasternrailway.co.uk
Dec 24th - Saturday service
Dec 25th - No service
Dec 26th - No service
Dec 27th - Saturday service
Dec 28th - Saturday service
24th, 27th and 28th - also additional trains morning and evening peak (please check station for actual times)
Dec 29th - Saturday service
Dec 30th - Sunday service
Dec 31st - Saturday service
Jan 1st - Sunday service

Oxford Allotments Association
Although currently all plots are tenanted, experience tells me that there could be some availability as the New Year comes in. So if you are thinking about allotment gardening, please give Barbara Hine a ring on 01959 525468 who will be pleased to show you around so you can have some idea what this sort of activity is all about and the benefits that can be gained from it.

Kent Police Special Constabulary
Kent Police are looking to increase the number of Special Constables. Special Constables are volunteers who work alongside police officers playing a vital role in assisting regular officers in their day to day duties. It is a very exciting part-time role in which you can volunteer for as little as 16 hrs per month. Kent is one of the few forces that use Special Constables in parish constable roles. This position involves working in a small area within the community. Find out more about the varied opportunities by calling 01622 654013 or 0500 787700.

Holiday Refuse Collections

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<tr>
<th>Normal Collection Day</th>
<th>Rescheduled Day</th>
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<td>Mon 24th December</td>
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Please ensure that your black and clear sacks are put out by 7am on your rescheduled day of collection. Refuse put out after the crew has been through your road will not be collected and MUST be taken back in until the next collection.

5-a-side Football - GIRLS
If you like football, are female and aged between 13 - 16 yrs (a bit negotiable) and would be interested in playing football in a 5 a-side team within the local area. Please leave your contact details for the attention of Sue at Otford Parish Council office on 01959 524808 or email at otfordpc@btinternet.com

Light Bulbs / Recycling
You can now dispose of your light bulbs safely. Household lightbulbs, including fluorescent tubes, halogen bulbs and energy saving bulbs, can now be taken to your local recycling centre at Dunbrik where new containers have been installed. Batteries can be disposed of at Currys and printer cartridges here at School House.

Knole DFAS
Knole Decorative and Fine Arts Society meets on the 3rd Thursday of the month at the Sevenoaks Community Centre, Bat & Ball. The next lecture will
Diameters or smaller will be collected until the end of collection in your road. Trees with a trunk of 3½" in diameter or smaller will be collected until the end of collection in your road. Trees with a trunk of 3½" at the kerbside and they will collect it at recycled by the District Council. All you do is put as in past years you can have your Christmas tree on 01732 460709 or Mrs Mary Aldous on 01732 780453.

**Picture of the Month**
The artist for December / February is Sheila Vizard. Sheila is the artist showing her painting over the Christmas period. She was born in Otford and has been married to a local farmer for 33 years. She joined the Otford Art Group over 5 years ago where, among other subjects, she gained an interest in botanical painting. She says that she is an interloper at botanical painting classes at the Bradbourne Wildlife Centre and that this has helped to develop her particular style of flower painting. Please contact Doug Dickerson on 01959 524183 if you would be interested in displaying your work in the Heritage Centre.

**Otford Short Mat Bowls**
Have you recently retired or are just fed up with television programmes? If so why not come along to the village hall and join in a game of short mat bowls. We meet on Wednesday and Friday evenings and also Thursday and Saturday afternoons. If you are interested please telephone Doug Dickerson on 01959 524183. You don't have to be recently retired, you can be younger.

**Sevenoaks DFAS**
The Decorative and Fine Arts Society of Sevenoaks (Evening NADFAS) 2007/2008 lecture season continues on 13th December. Mr John Benjamin will talk about ‘A Christmas Pie: The Evolution of Christmas Customs and Folk-lore down the Ages’. The Lectures start promptly at 1.45pm preceded by refreshments at 12.30pm. Anyone interested in joining the Society or who would like more information, please contact, Hilary Thomas on 01732 762529 and Alison Davis on 01732 780453.

**Planning**
The following applications will be considered by the Parish Council in December. For more information, please contact the Parish Clerk or the Head of Development Services, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent on 01732 227000

a. **New applications**
SE/07/03553 47 Tudor Drive
Part two and part single storey side extension, single storey rear extension and loft conversion to include rear facing dormer
Refused

SE/07/02640 6 Darnets Field
Erection of roof extension to form bedroom
Allowed

b. **Results received**
SE/07/02896 Broughton Manor High Street
Extension to utility room
Allowed

SE/07/02897 Broughton Manor High Street
LBC - Extension to utility room
Allowed

c. **Amended applications**
SE/07/02776 64 & 66 Well Road
Demolition of 2 existing residential dwellings and the erection of 21 dwellings, including 40% affordable housing provision, together with associated car parking, new access road and landscaping. As amplified by Ambient Noise Report received 22.10.07.

The Parish Council apologises if dates have gone past when you receive your newsletter as timings for deliveries cannot always be guaranteed due to pressure on our local printer and on the volunteer deliverers. Thankyou.

The Chairman, Parish Councillors, Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the Boxers Bobbie & Becky wish you all a very happy, restful and peaceful Christmas and New Year. Woof! Woof!