Otford Parish Council
May Newsletter 2005
No 134

Kent and South & South East England
Village of the Year 2002
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Annual Assembly
This is notification for the Annual Assembly of the Electors of the Parish, more commonly called the Annual Parish Meeting, which will be held, in the Village Hall on Monday 16th May at 7.30pm. This is your chance to ask questions about what is happening in the village, so please attend if you can.

Planning – Public Meeting
The Chairman of the Parish Council writes:
‘A meeting with Sevenoaks District Council personnel and the Councillor holding the Portfolio for planning and transport (Mrs Gill Davison) was held in April after 6 months of discussion and organising. It was arranged because of the general dissatisfaction with several planning decisions. Over 150 people came and heard of the complexities of planning procedures. The council officers’ presentations were detailed and illuminating but it cannot be claimed that it gave residents much satisfaction or hope for the future. An evening with so much detail is impossible to summarise here, but it was made clear that decisions by SDC could only be challenged by the applicant for the development, and in the opinion of many, some of the approval decisions reached by SDC reflected the values of councillors from other wards rather than the wishes of those who would live with the results. This happened despite the fact that the Sevenoaks Local Plan could in many cases be described as equivocal. The recent Planning Green Paper assumes councillors have to justify their decisions before ‘their electorate’ and this is sufficient reason for not allowing third party appeals; clearly, this justification does not happen. We were told by Mrs Davison that present disquiet arose because of the coincidence of a series of particular and unusual applications. Time will tell, but the unwanted buildings will remain, and it can never be satisfactory that, when the matter is open to interpretation, the final choice is not given to representatives of the community who will live with the consequence’.

Police Surgery
The next Police Surgery with our PCSO Dave Birchall will take place on SATURDAY 21st May between 9am and 10.30pm. The change of day is to help those of you who cannot make the normal weekday surgeries.

The Annual Village Fete takes place on Bank Holiday Monday 30th May commencing at 1pm on the village Recreation Ground. The procession starts from Hale Lane Recreation Ground at 12.30pm. The theme this year is ‘Nautical’. Please come and support the fete and have a great time.

The Parade
When you use the shops at The Parade can you please not park on the hatched area nearest Palace Field as this is the only entry and exit from Castle House and Cottage and needs to be accessible at all times. Thank you

Top Draw
TOP DRAW – The Otford Primary Draw. Your chance to win cash prizes and raise money for your local school.
The winning numbers of the April TOP Draw are:
1st Prize £50 – 132
2nd Prize £15 – 37
3rd Prize £10 – 65
Congratulations to this month’s winners and thank you to everyone who continues to support the school. Don’t forget forms are still available from the School office and Parish Council office, for those who would like to take part.

VE Day Display
Please come and have a look at the new display in the Heritage Centre put together to celebrate the End of the War in Europe Day. There are numerous interesting items to see and read.

Otford Allotments Association
The Otford Allotments Association would like to thank all who participated in our Boot Fair last month, either by booking a table or by coming to browse/
buy. This has raised sufficient funds to enable us to say that the new equipment shed is now ours.

If you would like to get involved even more and this time to your advantage, we have one or two allotment plots available for letting. Give Barbara Hine a ring on 01959 525468 if you are interested or would just like to have a look around. Perhaps we can look forward to seeing you at our two stalls at the forthcoming fete or if not then during National Allotment Week in August. Details will be published later.

**Picture of the Month**

The artist for May/June is Jackie Allen. She grew up in Sevenoaks, leaving to get married in the sixties. She had always dreamed of living in Otford and eleven years ago, she was able to realise her dream and move here, where her daughters and granddaughters also live. After many years in the fashion business Jackie retired and found time to paint and do other crafts and in fact, from time to time, teaches Arts and Crafts on cruise ships. She says that you can escape into a painting and create something that gives you satisfaction and if other people like it, then it is a bonus.

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**Otford & District Wine Club**

The Otford & District Wine Club invite you to a Games Evening on **Wednesday 25th May**, which will be held in the Otford Memorial Hall starting at 8pm. The games (such as snakes and ladders, beetle drives etc) are all played on tables. They require no brain-power or energy whatsoever, but are great fun! Pairs move from table to table until they have played all the games. There will be two overall winners who will receive prizes. As usual there will be a raffle and bar snacks will be provided, but bring your own drinks. It is free to members but visitors will be charged a small fee. Why not go along for a fun night out amongst friends?

On 30th May (Bank Holiday Monday) the club are running and Ice Cream Stall at the Otford Fete. Half the proceeds of this go to charity and the other half helps to fund Wine Club functions throughout the year. Please go along and help them for an hour or so during the day if you can, as selling ice cream cones is an extremely labour intensive operation, although very satisfying! Please pray for good weather.

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**Sevenoaks Embroiderers’ Guild**

The next meeting will take place in Otford Memorial Hall on **Saturday 28th May** when Priscilla Lowry will talk on - **Kimonos, Hanboks and Sari-Silks** for Celebrations. The meetings begin at 2pm and more information can be obtained from Pat Curtis on 01959 532391.

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**CAB Surgery**

The next CAB Surgery will take place at School House on **Tuesday 7th June** between 10am and 12 noon.

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**The Tree of Light**

The next meeting of the Gardeners’ Society will take place on **Tuesday 7th June** when Tom Hart Dyke will speak on - ‘Travels of an Orchid Hunter’. The intrepid explorer and former captive will tell his incredible story and his plans for a World Garden. Visitors and new members are always welcome. Admission: 50p members, £1 non-members. Admission price includes refreshments. For further details contact Janet Finney on 01959 523760 or visit www.otford.info/gardeners.

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On 9th July Otford Gardeners’ Society have organised a coach trip to Hampton Court Flower Show and there are spaces available. The cost of the trip is £32 for non-members which is inclusive of travel and entry to the shoe. There are discounts for Otford Gardeners members and RHS members. Please contact the secretary Janet Finney on 01959 523760 for details or collect an application form from the Library or Parish Council office.

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**Otford Afternoon W.I**

Meetings are held in the Village Hall at 2pm on the 2nd Tuesday each month. Membership is £21 per year and Tea at the meeting is 30p. The next meeting takes place on **14th June** when Martin Lloyd will talk about Passports, Assassins and Spies. Please contact 01959 522915 for more details.

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**St Bartholomew’s – Secret Gardens and Teddy Aerial Runway**

The next fund raising event is ‘**Secret Gardens**’ which takes place over the weekend of 4th and 5th June between 1 - 5pm when you will have a chance to look around 10 village gardens, most not normally open to the public, you will also be able to have tea,
buy your bedding plants, cakes, local produce, gardening books and there will be a treasure hunt for the children with prizes. Programmes which include maps are £4 each (children under 16 free) and are obtainable from St Bart’s Parish Office - Mon, Tue, Wed and Fri mornings between 10am and 12 noon and the Parish Council office Mon – Fri mornings between 8.30am and 12.30pm and will also be available at Church services.

Also calling all children and adults! - don’t forget to bring along your teddy bears (or other favourite soft toy) to the Church between 2.30pm and 5.00pm on both days and for £1 for children and £2.50 for adult bears see them descend the aerial runway from the top of the Church Tower. Each bear will receive a signed certificate to prove its bravery!

Spring into Water Wise Action

Warmer weather and gardening trends have prompted South East Water to remind customers to use water wisely, as we move out of one of the driest winters since records began in 1892. Only half the normal amount of rainfall fell over the winter months leaving water sources lower than average for the time of year in the South East region. As a result, water levels in aquifers - large natural underground features which act like sponges and rely on winter rainfall to fill them up - are now well below average for this time of year. About 75% of water supplies in South East Water's operational area, which covers parts of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire and Berkshire, come from these underground sources. And while the company’s reservoirs at Ardingly and Arlington in Sussex are currently at satisfactory levels, a continued lack of rain over the coming months could put those resources under extra pressure if demand increases during the spring and summer months. South East Water says its customers must start using water wisely now to help ensure there are sufficient supplies for everyone this summer. David Shore, Director of Operations for South East Water said:" The lack of rainfall over the winter months has left levels in our underground sources depleted. As we head into the traditionally warm, dry spring and summer months and people get out in their gardens, we are reminding people that water is a precious and finite resource which should not be wasted. We are asking customers to use water wisely in the garden and ensure we all have enough for our daily needs”.

Normally, garden watering makes up about 6% of water use on hot days it can soar to about 70%. This mainly due to garden sprinklers, which use as much water in an hour as a family of four does in a day. South East Water is reminding customers that adopting simple water efficiency measures can help make a positive impact on the regions water resources. These measures include:

- Applying mulch around your garden plants to lock in moisture.
- Using a water - butt in your garden - plants prefer rainwater to tap water.
- Using a bucket and sponge to wash your car instead of a hosepipe.
- Taking showers instead of baths.
- Turning off the tap when you clean your teeth.
- Installing a water saving Hippo bag in your toilet cistern, which can save about 1.6 litres per flush.
- Using washing machines and dishwashers only when you have a full load.

Customers can log onto www.southeastwater.co.uk for more information on water efficiency tips for the home and garden

Planning

The following applications will be considered by the Parish Council at its meeting in May. For more information, please contact the Parish Clerk or the Strategic Services Director, Sevenoaks District Council, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent on 01732 227000

a. New applications
SE/05/00864 38 Hillydeal Road
Single storey rear extension and new ground floor window to east side elevation

SE/05/00937 5 Shinecroft
Erection of conservatory at rear and erection of detached garage at front

SE/05/00995 19 Willow Park
Loft conversion with rear dormer
Replacement of first floor flat roof with pitched roof and replacement of all roof covering. Demolition of outside W.C., coal bunker and boiler enclosure additions. Installation of first floor W.C. and shower room.

**Teenage Drop-In**
The owners of the Bus Stop Café have agreed to stay open every Friday from 7pm to 9.30pm for 15 – 17 year olds to meet in a no drugs, no alcohol environment and it is being overseen by the 'Churches Together' team in Sevenoaks. Why not give it a try.

**Jaws Comes to Otford**
Were you near the Pond on 20th April, if you were then you might have seen the strange sight of a shark pursuing our ducks. It was all part of a promotional campaign by South Eastern Trains to show how easy it is to get to the London Attractions and our Pond will hopefully feature in publicity for the London Aquarium.
The model of the sharks fin was made by Peter Coles Models, and was towed across the Pond several times. At the end of the ‘shoot’ it was kindly donated by the company to the Heritage Centre where you can see it on show and the new lady duck another prop to the Parish Council.

Please note that **FISHING IS NOT ALLOWED** in the Village Pond.

**Otford & District Historical Society**
The programme of summer outings of the Otford & District Historical Society are as follows:

**Wednesday 25th May** - ¾ day to Chiddingstone Castle
- Home of the Streatfeild family for 400 years it contains interesting and varied collections of Egyptian, Japanese, Buddhist and Stuart items.
- Coach leaves Otford Pond at 1.30pm.
- Cost per head is £14 (tea included), Historic House Members £9.50

**Saturday 23rd July** - all day visit to Greenwich
- includes a visit to the ‘Nelson & Napoleon’ Exhibition at the National Maritime Museum marking the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar.
- Coach leaves Otford Pond at 9.00am
- Cost per head is Full £19.20, Concessions £17.00

**Saturday 3rd September** - all day visit to Portsmouth Dockyard with all visitor attractions including HMS Victory - built in 1769, HMS Warrior - when completed in 1861 was the world’s most formidable warship and the Mary Rose - built in 1511, Henry VIII’s flagship for many years, sank in battle in 1545 and raised in 1982 and undergoing conservation ever since.
- Coach leaves Otford Pond at 8.30am
- Cost is £22.00 per head

For bookings and further details please contact Cliff and Elizabeth Ward on 01959 522384.

**Care for Otford**
Care for Otford has been shown by many over recent months by many volunteers. To mention a few: the Gardens on the Green have been given their regular attention by the W.I. Councillors and spouses have cleared the footway by the Chalkpit, and walls adjoining the public toilets in the car park cleared in order to be repainted. The inevitable heavy vehicles taking material for the new pavilion in the Recreation Ground caused regrettable damage to the ground, which had been repaired through the generous work of a local farmer.