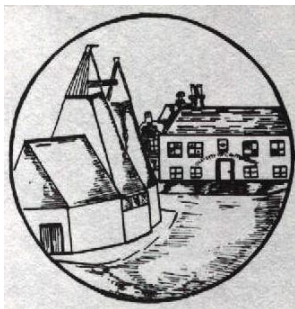




OHDS Autumn Newsletter

September 2016

No. 129



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Sophie Scott, Deirdre Hawkes, Jo Shrimpton ('It's Your Neighbourhood' assessor), Dave Goddard, at the planter on Milton Rd (Cromwell Rd end)

EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

6th October, 6.30pm: EGM for OHDS members at Kendall Hall, St Mary Bredin Church. Light refreshments served.

29th November, 6.30pm: AGM at the Baptist Church, St Georges Place.

EDITORIAL

STOP PRESS: Corinthian have now submitted some changes in response to questions by Canterbury City Council, and your comments on these changes need to be sent to CCC by 23rd Sept. at the latest. CCC Planning has provided a link to the changes on a new web page: <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/southcanterbury> although their artist's drawings do not show the commanding view of the proposed development as seen from the north.

Now that we have a new Prime Minister the Editor hopes the Kent representatives of her new government will take note of the expert report on traffic congestion vis-à-vis the ill-conceived Mountfield Park proposal. The Editor agrees strongly with the conclusion by local experts that without an Eastern bypass the Mountfield Park development should not go ahead. A full report by our Acting Chairman about this proposal is in this newsletter.

The Newsletter reminds members of the importance of attending the **EGM on 6th October** at St Mary Bredin's Kendall Hall to discuss the proposed OHDS-SCRA merger. The OHDS will hold its **AGM on 29th November** in tandem with the AGM for SCRA, as the final step before the new association, OHSCA, "goes live" if the merger is approved. If it gets approved then OHDS is not in any sense ending, it will have merged with a sister group making us together more significant on the local scene, with a larger combined membership, representing more households and with a greater influence.

Both OHDS and SCRA are rightly concerned about the increased air pollution from the traffic congestion that will arise from Mountfield Park's extra 4000 homes and businesses unless a bypass is guaranteed by KCC and the developers as an integral part of the development proposal. Residents living along congested roads are particularly at risk of air pollution. Pertinent to last newsletter's letter from the Secretary of EKAF, and the documented detrimental side effects of fracking in USA, I read that the prestigious American journal, *JAMA Internal Medicine*, has just published new research evidence showing a direct connection between the air pollution released by shale gas fracking and the increased number and severity of asthma attacks in people living near fracking fields, not just from escaping pollutants but also from the 24-hour lorry and other industrial road traffic. This highlights the importance of pushing for reducing local air pollution from whatever source.

The Society can be proud of its work with maintaining green spaces, and many of our residents have generously contributed their time and money to enhancing our streets. The shrubs at Lichfield Ave are looking magnificent, as are the new planters at each end of Milton Rd. Thanks to Margaret Allen's contribution, OHDS put up a planter at Albert Rd. In the Green Team section there is an update on 'It's Your Neighbourhood' and Britain in Bloom, as well as new tree plantings, and plans for the autumn.

Greta Cotterrell

ACTING CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The last few months have been an exceptionally busy time for your committee. In addition to our normal day to day activities(such as community garden care, newsletter publication,

social event arrangements , planning application and tree works monitoring) we have taken on board careful scrutiny of the largest planning application ever to come before the City Council (CA//16/00600) and detailed preparation for our proposed merger with the South Canterbury Residents Association(SCRA) leading to the formation later this year of the Oaten Hill & South Canterbury Association (OHSCA).

But firstly, I need to mention progress on two current City Council projects for which no space was available in our last edition.

The Higher and Further Education Impact Assessment is nearing its end. It has been a very open and transparent process throughout and a further open public consultation is envisaged for Sept /Oct before final conclusions and recommendations are signed off by the project team.

Work to date has revealed the detail of much of what I think all of us intuitively already knew about the scale of the income that academia brings to our area and that the ratio of students to local residents is by some measure the highest in the country.

However some important questions still remain about how much of that income subsequently recirculates within our local economy as opposed to immediate loss to Canterbury via repayment to the investors and development corporations that are funding the large student buildings being erected across the City.

Other vitally important questions centre on risk and opportunity costs. Any local economy that is so dependent on a single sector can be a great risk with even marginal changes in that activity. Thus, what would be the impact on Canterbury if student numbers were to change in years to come? At the moment, informed opinion seems to suggest that at least in the short term they might decline for a whole range of reasons including demographics, on line learning and Brexit. What would be threat to our academia reliant businesses and their staff and what opportunities might be created for new start ups and more social and affordable housing? The opposite questions need to be asked if in fact numbers rise.

With regard to the underpasses, the City Council is progressing with the improvements, and the Riding Gate underpass will be the first to be upgraded. I have had an assurance that the OHDS mural will remain in place for the time being and will not be removed without further formal consultation with the Society. The Council needs to assess how much money is left in the kitty from the Riding Gate before firming up its plans for St Georges. We await its proposal in due course and will publish details on our website (inclusion in our quarterly Newsletter may not be possible if we only have a short time to respond) to enable and invite comment from members before the Committee determines its view.

The Planning Application for the Mountfield Park development CA//16/00600 is working its way through the City Councils planning process with a decision to be taken at a special meeting of the planning committee scheduled for October .

Before that event there is to be a further and relatively short period of public consultation in which the Council will be inviting comment on the response from the developer to the detailed letter issued by the council following its preliminary consideration of the planning

application and the numerous responses sent in by other statutory agencies , community groups such as the Society and individual members.

As the details of the scheme become clear so does its impact on all of our lives and generations to come. Serious concerns have emerged about traffic, the impact on night-time light, air quality, the size of the development, the height of some of the buildings , the position of those buildings on land previously reserved as open space on a hill overlooking the City and adjacent to New Dover Rd. We are a unique World Heritage Site and the residents of Canterbury have a collective responsibility for its conservation.

Flat artistic impressions of leafy tree lined avenues of family homes cannot be relied upon to give a true impression of what it will all look like on completion. We will press for accurate scale models to be made available prior to the next consultation, which demonstrate the combined impact of topography and building size.

It needs to be remembered that, as well as homes, the development will accommodate business units, three schools, a moderately sized supermarket, and possibly a hospital.

Our three City Councillors have been extremely helpful throughout the process but they and CCC need to be fully aware of local residents' views and questions before a final decision is reached. The Society has been fully engaged with them on these issues so far and we will of course be making a formal submission at the appropriate time. **Our position would be strengthened enormously if as many members as possible could respond to the Council (with copies to our Barton ward Councillors) during the next round of public consultation. Please do follow the progress of the application on the Councils website and read the material sent in so far.**

As part of your scrutiny please do look very carefully at the proposals for traffic in our area. The latest plans that we have seen from the developer and KCC (and reacted to with some disbelief) can be summarised as follows. No eastern link /relief road / removal of parking bays along some of our roads / no clear "fast" bus route /no right turns at all at the Cross Keys junction /buses only right turn from St Georges into Upper Chantry Lane. Our concerns about extra traffic resulting from these plans in Dover St, Monastery St , St Lawrence Rd and Ethelbert Rd in particular have been dismissed by the developer. The findings of the traffic consultant we commissioned have been rejected out of hand and the developer maintains that by encouraging everyone to walk /cycle /use the bus whenever they can traffic levels in our Oaten Hill area will remain as they are now.

Our local KCC Councillors have seen these plans and I believe share our concerns.

Please, I urge you look at these proposals in detail and assess how they will affect your immediately local area and make your views known to both KCC and CCC as well as our elected representatives by the 23rd Sept. Just one of very many questions you might wish to ask yourself is what route someone travelling from Sturry Rd to the hospital might take?

I do hope that as many members as possible will attend our EGM on 6th Oct to decide on the Committee's proposal to merge with SCRA and form OHSCA .We have set out our reasons for suggesting this change in the previous Newsletter and the EGM will be a good

opportunity to hear directly from you about what the proposed new Associations priorities should be and to offer any reassurance that still may be needed that the very best traditions of OHDS will be maintained.

David Kemsley

SECRETARY'S REPORT

OHDS / SCRA MERGER PROPOSAL

Since January of this year representatives from the Oaten Hill and District Society and the South Canterbury Residents Association committees, with an independent Chair, have been holding regular meetings to discuss the possibility of a merger between the two groups which have very similar catchment areas and objectives.

A full agreement on a merger has now been reached and a new Constitution has been prepared with the backing of both the committees. We now just need the approval of OHDS (and SCRA) members, and then the merged body, which would be called the Oaten Hill and South Canterbury Association (OHSCA), can begin its work. The OHDS Local History Group would continue under its existing name as a special interest group of the new Association.

OHDS Extraordinary General Meeting

Accordingly, all OHDS members are now invited to attend an important Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society to listen to the arguments, to have an opportunity to express opinions and then to vote on the necessary resolutions proposed by your committee. We hope many of you will be able to attend this short, single-issue meeting.

This meeting will be held on **Thursday October 6th 2016 at 6.30pm in Kendall Hall, St Mary Bredin Church, Nunnery Fields**. Refreshments will be served.

The details of the necessary resolutions to be proposed, with the text of the proposed new Constitution and Standing Orders, will be posted on our website by the due date, that is no later than three weeks before the EGM, at <http://www.oatenhill.org.uk/pdfs/egm.pdf>

For those of you without internet access please write to me, or phone, giving your name and address and we will deliver a printed copy of these documents to your door.

OHDS Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will take place on the evening of **Tuesday November 29th 2016 at 7.15 pm in the Lower Room, Canterbury Baptist Church, St George's Place** and we have arranged that the SCRA and OHDS AGMs will follow consecutively.

If the OHDS/SCRA merger has been agreed by the General Meetings in October then the evening will proceed as follows:

6.30 pm SCRA AGM (Please note that OHDS members are invited to arrive early and attend this SCRA meeting if they wish)

7.15 pm OHDS AGM (SCRA members are invited to stay on and attend this OHDS meeting)

8.00 pm Inaugural OHSCA Meeting - election of a first committee, followed by an open discussion led by the new chair. All present are welcome to attend this final part of the evening followed by celebratory refreshments.

However, **if the merger has not been agreed** then the OHDS AGM will still be held at the same place and on the same date but will start at a slightly later time of 7.30pm and will include election of a new OHDS committee as well as the usual reports of our activities during the year.

Nomination forms for the new OHSCA or OHDS committee can be requested from November 1st.

Please inform one of the committee members if you have not transport and need a lift.

Thank you.

Chris Tucker, Hon. Sec., 15 Vernon Place, CT1 3HG, 01227 761554.

TREES and GREEN TEAM NEWS AND UPDATES

TREES

I have been privileged to hold the post of Tree officer for the Society for the last five years.

I have enjoyed the role immensely and learned a lot – not just about the trees themselves but how our various public bodies make decisions about preservation, maintenance, planting and felling.

During this time, however, a number of other OHDS tasks have come my way and I am very aware that I have not been able to give tree and wider environmental issues the attention they deserve. It is therefore time for me to step down and make way for someone with fresh energy and ideas.

We will have all witnessed with much distress the wholesale clearance of trees from large plots of land in New Dover Rd and Puckle Lane to make way for intensive building developments. Although the City Council has impressive policies in place about landscaping

and tree planting, it is my strong impression that in practice more trees and environmentally innovative ideas such as green roofs are always rock bottom of the pecking order when it comes to planning decisions. This needs to change.

On the whole, we witness therefore minimal levels of new greenery in the many new developments completed and under way in our area and elsewhere in Canterbury. The most recent example being the proposal for additional car parking and access from Roper Rd to Canterbury West station in which great emphasis is laid upon the height and capacity of the new buildings together with the new shopping facilities - but yet again not a mention from the powers that be about air quality, the loss of trees and the need for new green screening. As usual, it was left to the same individual residents, whose names we readily recognise and who thankfully care greatly about these things, to point out this deficiency by writing to the Kentish Gazette. I do not, by the way, understand why local environmental groups are apparently not more vocal about such vital matters.

As I walk around the our area and the City Centre parks I often think how lucky we are to enjoy the imaginative tree species choices made by individual homeowners and our forebears who planned the planting in the Dane John and Westgate gardens. By explaining the whole range of life quality benefits that trees offer we need to continue to do our best to encourage our individual householders, statutory authorities and development corporations to not just to plant lots more of them but plant a much wider range of foliage blossom and scent.

I wish my successor well and wish to record my appreciation to everyone who has helped me since 2011.

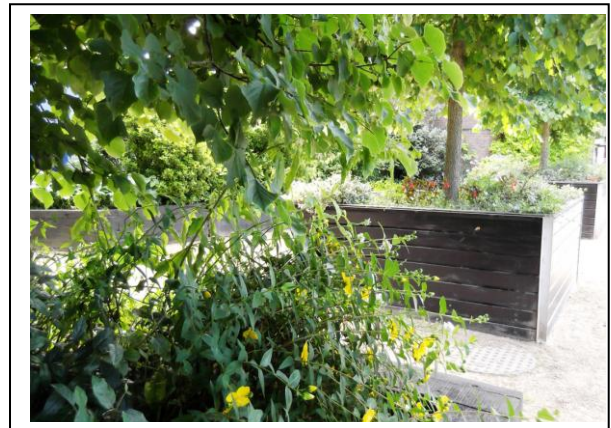
David Kemsley

GREEN TEAM UPDATES

It's Your Neighbourhood

All the Green Team worked really hard to get our beds in St Georges Garden, the Fire Station Garden and Milton Road ready for Jo Shrimpton, the assessor of the projects for 'It's Your Neighbourhood', who met the team on 4th July at Milton Rd. where the team had created two beautiful planters now blooming with flowers. She was impressed by the way we have developed one area, got it established and then moved on to the next area. The support that so many of you have given has been fantastic. In September we discover more about what she thinks – so a report on this at Christmas. Our horticultural efforts are also part of Canterbury's entry for Britain in Bloom. This year photographs of bulb planting in Stanmore Court and tree planting in Milton Road were included as evidence of year-round effort, as well as our spring and summer displays elsewhere – so thank you, all who helped in these.

The Green Team received plaudits from the 'Britain in Bloom' judges for the OHDS contributions to the Canterbury in Bloom competition.



A splendid new planter was erected this summer and we are really grateful to Margaret Allen, a member of the Green Team, for her efforts in getting this project to fruition. Contributions towards the planting and maintenance of shrubs and trees are always very welcome. The photograph of the planter is below and also on our website.



Tree planting

After much discussion we want to plant two trees this year. One will be in the Old Dover Road at the junction with Cowdrey Place. This will be very expensive, because it means KCC have to dig up the pavement, but we think it will be worth it. The other tree will be funded by residents of Ersham Road and will replace one planted in 2011 which has been run into too many times. Donations towards future tree planting are particularly welcome.

Helping the Green Team

We intend to do a little more in Milton Road and, in the Autumn, we will be planting more bulbs to cheer us up in the Spring. If you'd like to take part, please let either Deirdre Hawkes or myself know.

If you have any suggestions for your area, we'll be happy to hear it.

Sophie Scott

SOCIAL EVENTS AND NEWS

St. Augustine's Abbey Resident Pass

Some years ago, members of the Society established that local residents are historically entitled to free access to the grounds of St. Augustine's Abbey. English Heritage are now issuing residents of CT1 and CT2 postcodes with an annual Resident Pass on completion of their application form and production of proof of residency (Council Tax Bill, utility bill, etc). Just ask at the Visitor Centre, Longport.

Marion Bell

YOUR LETTERS AND VIEWS

An update from a concerned local resident on the problem of graffiti on CCTV boxes:

The Managing Director of the CCTV company which monitors travel flow throughout Kent, Clifford Corne, intervened in order that the graffiti could be removed from the CCTV box opposite Rochester House recently. Unfortunately, the exterior of these CCTV boxes is supposed to be maintained by KCC which appears not to budget even a minimal amount towards graffiti removal. There is an electric box at the same junction next to the cleaned CCTV box which is still covered in graffiti as it is also supposed to be maintained by KCC and hence cannot be cleaned by the CCTV company.

By the way, the New Dover Road railway bridge was tagged again on the night of Wednesday 17 August – see photo below:



New Dover Rd railway bridge

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP NEWS

Our latest booklet “Longport ThroughThe Ages” will be completed and published in the autumn. At the kind invitation of the School, members of the group visited Barton Court Grammar School buildings and grounds to view first hand where incidents recorded for the forthcoming book occurred.

A working group led by Dr David Potter has begun work on our next publication describing the history of Oaten Hill. The booklet will concentrate on St Sepulchre’s Nunnery, Oaten Hill, Upper Chantry Lane, Cossington Road and Oaten Hill Place.

Contributions from members who may have memories, information or photographs should be forwarded to David at D.L.Potter@kent.ac.uk

We are already grateful for contributions from Richard Young (formerly of the Cross Keys Pub) and Captain Parker, a former resident of the area.

We continue to record oral histories of local people and welcome contributors.

We meet at 10.30am at Kent and Canterbury Club every second Tuesday on alternate months. The next meetings will be in September and November. Please come along.

Visit our page of the Oaten Hill web site at www.oatenhill.org.uk/local-history to see details of (and to order) our publications, set out below.

1. The Holmans of Canterbury.

2. The Bigglestons of Canterbury.

3. Nunnery Fields Remembered.

4. The Pinnocks of Canterbury.

5. Old Dover Road – Past & Present.

6. Ivy Lane Revisited.

Nos. 1-4 at £3.00 each, No. 5 and 6 at £6.00. (+£1.50 p&p)

Mike Brain, Chair Local History Group

Tel 767343 or family@mbrain.freemove.co.uk

The Oaten Hill Mystery - Part 1

Our district of Canterbury takes its name, Oaten Hill, from a mound no longer visible. Originally this was probably a Romano-British burial mound, one of a series on the south-eastern side of the city. One of these, the Dane John (heightened by Alderman Simmons in 1790), is a notable feature of modern Canterbury. Another lies nearby, on the other side of the inner ring road, but now only just visible, having been partly leveled in 1783. On what remains of this mound sits what was once the St Mary Bredin School, more recently the Pavilion Garage, now empty awaiting an uncertain future. Others were recalled by early antiquarians – e.g. Salt Hill, by St Georges Gate, long completely disappeared above ground.

Old maps, starting with the little sketch of Canterbury in the corner of Speed's early sixteenth century map of Kent, show the "Oate Hill" mound topped by a gallows in a not-quite-square space where Dover Lane (now Street) met Chantry Lane. This is approximately now the rectangle bounded by The Shrubbery (the large house behind the trees), Upper Chantry Lane, The Oast and the Old City Bar. Confusingly the name Oaten Hill itself is now used for a short stretch of road leading from that space to join the Old Dover Road at the Cross Keys pub. Speed, along with successor cartographers, seems to be representing a permanent gallows or gibbet. I have found documentary evidence of the "Ote Hill" gallows as early as the 1570s.

However, exactly where the gallows stood and when they ceased to fulfil their grisly task has confused local historians. The late Henry Lefever, a former president of OHDS, writing in 1980 ⁽¹⁾ said that the gallows were in use “up to 1799”, and this date has been repeated by several others, hardly surprising as Henry was quoting a 1948 article by the respected Cathedral archivist William Urry. As the putative 1999 bicentenary approached, I researched the gallows history so that this anniversary could be duly celebrated. Alas, it turned out that the 1799 date was a misreading of a footnote added to the third edition (1825) of Gostling’s “Walks in & about Canterbury”. This recorded the erection of a temporary scaffold at the Westgate gaol in 1799; the second edition of Gostling had referred to the Oaten Hill scaffold as if still existing in 1777, but neither offers any evidence as to when it was pulled down. Other sources, e.g. Hasted, confirm that what happened in 1799 was the first use of a Westgate Tower gallows.

Last year, with considerable help from others ⁽²⁾, I established the last use of the Oaten Hill gallows as being on Friday 17 January 1783; Thomas Stokes was hanged at about a quarter to one on that day for “armed robbery”. His case, as recorded in the contemporary columns of the Kentish Gazette and the Gentleman’s Magazine, was far from straightforward robbery; rather it seems he was put to death, protesting his innocence of the alleged robbery, for an “abominable” insult to a gentleman! I will write more of that interesting case in the next/ a future OHDS newsletter.

Neither the Gazette nor the Magazine account makes clear whether this was on the permanent gallows or a specially erected one, though the later references to a scaffold specially erected for the event at the Westgate Tower from 1799 onwards imply that the previous Canterbury practice had been to use a gallows already standing at the traditional site. The Gazette confirmed that the 1783 hanging was “at Oaten Hill”, but the Gentleman’s Magazine muddles the evidence, telling its readers that Stokes “was executed on Peterhill, near Canterbury” – was this a simple mistake, or was it an alternative name for Oaten Hill? Does anyone know of a Peterhill in the Canterbury area.

It may well be that by then Oaten Hill was the name of what had become an open space, the mound itself having gone. Doidge’s map of Canterbury (surveyed 1752) shows an unnamed lozenge-shaped area, with a path all round and a road across the middle on the present alignment of the top part of modern Dover Street. The 1768 Matthews & Wren map shows

this area in a similar way, naming it Gallows Green. On both we see two apparently grassed triangles, one where The Shrubbery’s trees now grow and the other now a car-park. By 1798, when Hasted wrote about the city’s previous place of execution he stated in a footnote (implying a recent development) that the city had sold the site “to a private individual” and that it had been converted into a pleasure ground ⁽³⁾.

So where exactly was the Oaten mound or hill? Matthews & Wren (1768) show the gallows quite clearly in what is now the Shrubbery garden, so that presumably is where Thomas Stokes met his end (1783). But Lefever, following Urry, located the mound further south, roughly where the Oast now stands and the cars now park. Was the mound levelled by 1752, as Doidge's survey implies? If so, was the curved route at the top of Dover Street run across the site of the mound, which had lain in the middle of the modern space? Or did this curved route originally run round the old mound, with traffic steadily eroding it (Lefever's suggestion)? Or did Urry get the original site wrong, as he did the 1799 date?

Indeed, do we need a car park excavation here in Canterbury to pin down just where the original Oaten Hill stood?

References:

- (1) "Oaten Hill" pp 41-7 of "The Parish of St. Martin and St. Paul" Historical Essays in Memory of James Hobbs (ed. Margaret Sparks).
- (2) The late Frank Panton researched death sentences passed in Canterbury, listing 22 sentences in 16 trials between 1737 and 1817, of whom the majority were not hanged; his list is available in his Ph D thesis (Finances and government in Canterbury, eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century) in the Templeman Library. Doreen Rosman kindly put me on to this list; David Lewis supplied me with the reference to the Gentleman's Magazine and Carolyn Edrich helped me trawl through micro-film of the Kentish Gazette in the Beaney.
- (3) Edward Hasted "The History of the County of Kent" 2nd ed, Vol XI, p 103

Alas, it turned out that the 1799 date was a misreading of a footnote added to the third edition (1825) of Gostling's "Walks in & about Canterbury". This recorded the erection of a temporary scaffold at the Westgate gaol in 1799; the second edition of Gostling had referred to the Oaten Hill scaffold as if still existing in 1777, but neither offers any evidence as to when it was pulled down. Other sources, e.g. Hasted, confirm that what happened in 1799 was the first use of a Westgate Tower gallows.

(to be continued)

Michael Steed

Dear member,
Thank you for paying your subscription for 2016.
Sophie Scott

OATEN HILL AND DISTRICT SOCIETY COMMITTEE LIST for 2016

Acting Chairman	David Kemsley	32 Cowdrey Place, CT1 3PD	(472561) chairman@oatenhill.org.uk
Secretary	Chris Tucker	15 Vernon Place, CT1 3HG	(761554) secretary@oatenhill.org.uk
Membership Secretary and Treasurer	Sophie Scott	27 Ersham Road CT1 3AR	(456285) sophie01@btinternet.com or membership@oatenhill.org.uk
Planning	Keith Rishworth	10 St. Lawrence Close, CT1 3PQ	(785700) planning@oatenhill.org.uk
Trees and Green Spaces	David Kemsley	32 Cowdrey Place, CT1 3PD	(472561) trees@oatenhill.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Greta Cotterrell	42 St Lawrence Forstal, CT1 3PA	(454710) editor@oatenhill.org.uk
Green Team lead person	Sophie Scott	27 Ersham Road CT1 3AR	(456285) sophie01@btinternet.com
IT and Website	Chris Tucker	15 Vernon Place, CT1 3HG	(761554) website@oatenhill.org.uk
Social and Minutes Secretaries	Jane Farrell Marion Bell	5 Oaten Hill, CT1 3HP 13 Wells Avenue, CT1 3YB	(766301) janefarrell@btconnect.com (459949) marion1949bell@yahoo.co.uk
Local History Group Representative	Graham Wood	Lansdown Cottage, Lansdown Road, CT1 3JR	(472932) history@oatenhill.org.uk
Committee member	Fred Whitemore	37 Dover Street, CT1 3HQ	(768870) fred@fredwhitemore.wanadoo.co.uk
Planning Advisor	Henry Sparks	13 Longport CT1 1PE	(456172) henrycdsparks@aol.com
South Canterbury Representative	Tim Carlyle	17 Norman Road, CT1 3LX	(456329) tim.carlyle@talk21.com
Newsletter Distribution	Deirdre Hawkes	40 Dover Street CT1 3HQ	(454956)