

OATEN HILL & SOUTH CANTERBURY ASSOCIATION



NEW YEAR NEWSLETTER

digital edition

JANUARY 2026

No. 37

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

Thank you so much for supporting OHSCA throughout 2025 with your subscriptions and generous donations. We all look forward to another year of activities, newsletters, and reactions to local issues.

OHSCA membership gives so much – quarterly newsletters, emailed planning alerts and monitoring of the Local Plan, support on specific problems like the Cossington Road lampposts (see page 4), and a great range of social activities. We hope very much that you'll renew your membership this month and encourage a neighbour or two to join. About 1 in 10 households in South Canterbury currently belong to OHSCA – let's try to make it 2 in 10! Our Membership Secretary, Peter Whisson, will be very pleased to receive your 2026 subscriptions.

Everyone is welcome at OHSCA activities, so do come along to them. The Local Author Talks organised by Lorna Durrani were extremely popular, and I was thrilled to see so many members at the AGM in October. Maybe the opportunity to catch up with friends, the fascinating talk by Jackie Eales, and splendid buffet supplied by SEA were the main attractions! And it was at the AGM that I was able to thank all our members for their support and everyone in their various roles who keep OHSCA going. How fortunate we are to have such splendid people in the Association.

Marion Bell (Honorary Secretary)



The **EASTBRIDGE HOSPITAL** (currently national news for sad reasons – see page 2) is the subject of a major article in this issue.

CONTENTS

Happy New Year	p. 1
Editorial	p. 2
Membership and Website	p. 2
Planning	p. 2
HealthCare news and <i>Asylum Years</i>	p. 5
Social Events	p. 6
<i>Small Things</i> (book review)	p. 7
Local History	p. 8
Amici Chorus	p. 9
Eastbridge Hospital	p. 10
Committee & Contacts 2025–2026	p. 12
Dates for Your Diary	p. 12
<i>Digital Extra (pp. 13–30) includes an article on Gerald Parsons and the Oaten Hill Garage, and a special section on the Biggleston lampposts.</i>	

EDITORIAL – A NEW YEAR MISCELLANY

At the Committee's request, this has been the first OHSCA newsletter to be printed in colour (pp. 1–12). To make best use of this innovation, and to reflect the fact that this edition now only goes to Members (not freely to all 2000+ homes in the OHSCA area, as formerly), I have instituted a few changes to the usual layout – most significantly, the Minutes of the AGM have not been printed (but are included here, in Digital Extra; they will be printed in the Autumn 'AGM' edition), nor has the Membership Form (see p. 30) been printed (all households now receive our four-page flyer that includes the form; it is also available from our website).

The fate of our historic streetlights has suddenly emerged as a major OHSCA issue. On page 4, Guy Mayhew introduces what is at stake – we have a whole special section about this in Digital Extra (pp. 18–22).

Nigel Fletcher-Jones's article on the history of the Eastbridge Hospital was 'commissioned' long before the sorry plight this truly historic building, now thought to be in need of a huge sum of money to stop it literally falling into the river, became national news (e.g. BBC S East: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0l99784ne3o>).

Nigel is a trustee of the Eastbridge Hospital, which will have the major responsibility for fund raising – another example of a local charity actively supported by OHSCA members. And several members are performers in the Amici Chorus, a key activity of yet another local charity, Canterbury Cantata Trust (p. 9).

So I am delighted to include some recollections by Huw Kyffin, written specially to mark the first 13 years of the choir's existence under the leadership of celebrated East Kent musician Grenville Hancox – who has just stepped down from the role. Grenville served some years ago as Chair of SCRA, and was also long associated with OHDS – the 'parents' of OHSCA. The Millennium 'Cromwell Road Conga', instigated by Grenville, is the stuff of local legend. As Marion states, we really are fortunate to have so many splendid people associated with our Association!

Dick Vane-Wright

MEMBERSHIP

I take a deep breath as this, the first newsletter of 2026, goes out to members. It's time for the renewal of subscriptions, which I am hoping will flow in steadily over the first few weeks of the year. The good news is that inflation has not affected our price, which is £5 per household; and we introduce no changes to methods of settling payment. Cash or cheques may be directed to 41B Dover Street, CT1 3HQ. Or if bank transfer is preferred, the name remains OHSCA, the branch code number, 60-04-27 and account number, 90612094. The basic subscription keeps us going – an extra small donation enables the Association to support area causes, social and environmental. Whatever gift OHSCA makes towards these is reported in newsletters and at the AGM.

What has 2026 in store for OHSCA? That is entirely up to us all – to propose, to organise and to participate in. OHSCA has no authoritarians. New members are as valued as long-serving ones and new ideas compete in consideration equally with those that have worked in the past. May OHSCA bring cheer as well as challenge in the year ahead!

Peter Whisson, Membership Secretary.
membership@ohsca.org

WEBSITE AND EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

OHSCA has a website (<http://www.ohsca.org>) which provides useful information on all the subgroups under the OHSCA umbrella, such as Local History, and news about local council plans and developments. It also acts as an archive, storing previous quarterly newsletters and images. If you lose your paper newsletter or the digital version gets lost in the daily deluge of emails, do access the website – updated monthly, it contains an events diary (<http://www.ohsca.org/events.html>) and photographs of events. I welcome any members' photographs and other interesting items that could be added.

OHSCA also sends out email alerts, usually reminders of specific activities, but also any changes in previously published activity information, and planning applications or planning news pertinent to the OHSCA area. You can sign up to these by including your email address on the membership form and agreeing to its use, or you can send an email to me directly (see my email address below) asking to be subscribed. You can unsubscribe from receiving the emails at any time by ticking the 'unsubscribe' option at the bottom of the email, but please note, that this does not mean that you have resigned from OHSCA. If you do wish to resign, please send a resignation note or email to the Membership Secretary (Peter Whisson, postal address above, or via membership@ohsca.org).

Lucy Fletcher-Jones

OHSCA website and Events bulletin alerts:
website@ohsca.org

PLANNING

David Kemsley's planning report for this Newsletter covered four issues – the first two ('Local Plan' and 'Local Government Reorganisation') are included here. Also placed here are an open letter (box) by Jan Pahl proposing that, with respect to local government changes, the need for new town councils is now urgent

(Whitstable appears to be the first to have a campaign: <https://www.ct5peoplesforum.org/local-democracy-ct5>); an update from Jane Pollok on the South Canterbury development Community Panel; an introduction from Guy Mayhew concerning the fate of Canterbury's historic lampposts (for much more on this issue, please go to pp. 18–22), and a note about the new Pilgrims' Way school building. David's contributions on 'Environmental Protection' and 'Illegal Waste Dumping' are included in Digital Extra (p. 23). Ed.

Local Plan

OHSCA members will be aware that the latest Canterbury City Council Draft Local Plan S18 public consultation concluded in October. This consultation was restricted to inviting comments only on material changes to the previous version – the most significant of which were the withdrawal of the proposal for a 2000 homes development on land owned by the University of Kent at Blean, and the addition of significant additional housing on Wincheap Orchards and between the A257 and the South Canterbury urban development (formerly Mountfield Park).

Whilst welcoming certain elements of the revised plan, the OHSCA Committee felt that it was seriously flawed in terms of need assessment 'environmental protection, infrastructure provision, and overall deliverability. The Committee's conclusions were subsequently fully incorporated into the 15 page formal submission from ACRA (Alliance of Canterbury Residents Associations).

The CCC Local Planning team is now carefully examining all the responses received. They will be published, along with the final draft of the Local Plan, at the end of February. The provisional draft timetable is for this final draft version to go to the CCC Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March (with papers published around 25 February). Then onward to Cabinet and Full Council, asking permission to consult, under Regulation 19, on 18 March. Comments on a Regulation 19 public consultation are restricted to the criteria set out below:

- **Legal Compliance:** Whether the local authority has followed all the correct legal and procedural requirements in preparing the plan (e.g. has it been subject to the correct environmental assessments, or has it followed its own Statement of Community Involvement?), and the:
- **Tests of Soundness:** Whether the plan's content is robust enough to be adopted. According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), a plan is considered "sound" if it is:
- **Positively prepared:** Based on a strategy that objectively meets the area's needs;

- **Justified:** An appropriate strategy based on a robust evidence base and reasonable alternatives;
- **Effective:** Deliverable over the plan period, with necessary infrastructure and joint working with other authorities in place;
- **Consistent with national policy:** Aligns with the NPPF and other national planning policies; and fulfils the
- **Duty to Cooperate:** Whether the local authority has engaged constructively with neighbouring authorities and other bodies on cross-boundary issues.

Following this final stage in the process, CCC will analyse the Regulation 19 consultation feedback and make any necessary changes, known as Main Modifications, and submit the plan to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination – which involves hearings and ultimately an Inspector's report recommending whether the plan is sound and can be adopted, or whether further changes are required.

David Kemsley, 15 December 2025

Town Councils are Key to Local Quality of Life

The excellent article in the *Kentish Gazette* ('How Councils want to carve up Kent', 4 December) omitted to mention a crucial aspect of the changes coming in local government. In these changes Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council are to disappear and be replaced with a small number of Unitary Authorities. Canterbury will be part of a new East Kent Unitary Authority.

It will be essential to set up Town Councils for Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay *before* the changes take place. Without this, people in these places will be seriously disadvantaged, with no local body responsible for local matters below what could be a remote Unitary Authority.

All over Kent, town and parish councils are key to the quality of life locally. They run parks, sports fields and allotments, clear litter, protect local assets and traditions and respond to local people's concerns. For example, a remote Unitary Authority with other priorities could sell off a locally loved sports field or historic building, while a town council would not only care for these assets, but be able to get extra funding to improve them.

The rural areas in Canterbury District have parish councils, but at present the three urban areas, Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay, do not have Town Councils. Before the changes take effect, setting up Town Councils for these three places could be the greatest legacy Canterbury City Council could leave to our district.

Jan Pahl (Canterbury Society)

Local Government Reorganisation

OHSCA members will be aware that the Government has embarked on a major reorganisation of local government in areas such as Kent, which are currently served by County and District Councils (DCs). They are to be replaced by Unitary Authorities (UAs), for areas having populations of 500–600,000 people, with a directly elected Mayor for each region.

At present in Kent we have one County Council, one UA (Medway), and 12 DCs. During the summer the councils collectively commissioned a professional consultancy to prepare a series of business plans which the councils could then use to evaluate various potential configurations of UAs across the county.

This information enabled CCC to decide its preference as Option 4d, which would join Canterbury with Thanet, Dover, and eastern parts of Folkestone

and Swale. Two other authorities (Medway and Ashford) supported this option. Three other authorities opted for another configuration of four UAs. Five authorities supported a three UA configuration. Two authorities chose a five UA option and KCC's preference is a single UA for the whole county.

The government was notified of each council's preferred choice on November 28th. The government will now assess each proposal against its own criteria, and will launch a consultation on the options which it believes best match those criteria, in the New Year.

David Kemsley, 15 December 2025

The 'South Canterbury' Development

My first encounter with what is now known as South Canterbury (the 4000 home development previously named Mountfield Park) was attending a site walk at the end of May this year, organised by Alice Seller from the developer, GummerLeathes. The purpose was to give a basic outline of the plan for the site, while walking around it.

Following this visit I applied to join the Community Panel, which meets every couple of months to be updated on developments affecting the project, and to have the opportunity to comment, raise concerns and make suggestions. Members of the panel are local residents who have an interest in the project, and meetings typically have about a dozen people attending. Alice's role is to facilitate meetings of the Panel, as well as being a link between the community and the developer. The Panel would expect her to be able to feed back to them on the reaction of the developer to suggestions and concerns that they have raised.

A second walkabout was arranged in early October, led by the Head of Engineering from GummerLeathes. This focussed on more technical issues, including drainage, earthworks and power supply.

The most recent Community Panel meeting was held in November, where we were updated on a geotechnical (soil) survey of the site, which is to be undertaken to understand the physical properties of the land, and monitor ground water levels over the winter. Alice Seller informed the Panel that a flyer has been sent to some 350 local addresses to inform residents about the soil survey works being undertaken. The Panel was also given the opportunity to comment on what successful engagement within the local community would look like. A wide variety of suggestions were made including:

- involving local schools and residents associations,
- a permanent exhibition, e.g. in the library, to keep people updated,
- open days,
- information on archaeological finds.

Finally, the Panel was invited to share concerns and potential opportunities; there was much discussion around

- air and noise pollution,
- impact on traffic flow, and travel in general,
- wildlife and healthcare services,
- meaningful green spaces,
- affordable homes,
- the *Via Francigena*.

The meeting concluded with a presentation of the anticipated timeline for the project, currently expected to take about 20 years to complete. At the next meeting, in the New Year, the Panel will explore dates for a local study tour of a nearby new development, to give a perspective on its work.

Anyone interested in the South Canterbury development should visit the GummerLeathes website (<https://www.southcanterbury.co.uk/index.php?contentid=11>). Email Alice at hello@southcanterbury.co.uk if interested in joining the Panel or future public events.

Jane Pollok

Why Canterbury's Old Streetlights Matter



Following an alert a few months ago by OHSCA Member Jenny MacDonald, concerning the potential loss of all heritage streetlights on Cossington Road, Digital Extra (pp. 18–22) carries a special section devoted to our famed Biggleston cast-iron lamp-posts. Here we are very grateful to Guy Mayhew (OHSCA Member and Deputy Chair, Canterbury Society) for introducing what is at stake, and framing our local issue in a Canterbury-wide perspective. We hope many members will feel moved support the emerging campaign. Ed.

Canterbury's cast-iron streetlights are easy to overlook, but they are part of what gives the city its character. Many were made

locally by the Biggleston foundry and have quietly framed the streets of the historic centre for generations.

Residents have raised concerns after some of these columns were removed and replaced with standard steel versions. Despite rumours, there is no evidence of widespread failure. Many columns can be repaired and repainted, and replacement should be the exception rather than the rule in historic areas.

The deeper issue is that there has been no clear policy on how heritage street furniture should be treated. When guidance is missing, practical decisions tend to favour generic solutions. Public pressure is now making a difference. Councils are talking again, replica options are back on the table, and the issue is finally receiving attention.

If you value everyday details that make Canterbury special, now is the time to get involved. Read more, see a map of the historic columns, and support the campaign at: canterburysociety.org.uk/streetlights.

Guy Mayhew

Pilgrims' Way School – Update

In our Spring 2024 newsletter we reported on the commencement of building works for the new Pilgrims'

Way School. Fast forward to winter 2025 and Mrs Campbell, Head Teacher, reports that the new building was completed in November. The school will be moving into the new building over the Christmas holidays, ready to open for the start of Term 3.



Phase two of the project then gets underway, which involves demolition of the old school site and landscaping. Here is a link to the contractor's website, which provides updates on the project:

<https://www.morgansindallconstruction.com/our-projects/live-projects/pilgrims-way-primary-school>

Marion Bell

OHC (OHSCA HEALTHCARE GROUP)

The OHC group monitors changes affecting healthcare in the OHSCA area, with a focus on the NHS, GP practices, and the K&C Hospital.

During the autumn there were two meetings each of the Integrated Care Board ('ICB': 27 July and 4 November) and of the Integrated Care Partnership Joint Committee ('ICP JC': 6 October and 8 December.)

The ICB's July meeting was the last with its founding CEO. Besides the usual cycle of business regarding Performance, Risk etc., it included a long item on the NHS 10-year Health Plan, some of which has become clearer since its launch, although some aspects, notably timing, have not. The ICB's November meeting was the first with new CEO Adam Doyle. In addition to the recurring items on Quality etc., it included a 'Focus' on Digital Data and Technology, and a wide-ranging initial appraisal by the CEO of the ICB's character and capability, with emphasis on staff 'Culture.'

The October ICP JC meeting was the first since March. KCC & Medway Unitary Council provide committee services and, alternately, its Chair – but only 25–30% of the members and officers who attend it. The ICB is its third main constituent, the other members being from District Councils and various Health and Care bodies. Its scheduled Summer meeting was cancelled, following the KCC May election and membership changes; also notable is that, on the latest available figures, of the 27 members and officers attending the ICP JC's October meeting, only 9 were among the 19 attending the March meeting. Continuity (and perhaps commitment?) do not seem to be strong, considering that although formally a joint sub-committee of the ICB, KCC and Medway Unitary, ICPs were created as the organisation which should ensure effective collaboration on all Health and Care provision. But now, the NHS 10-year Plan announces the abolition of the Integrated Care Partnerships; the integration role will apparently pass to territorially smaller Integrated Health Organisations.

Denis Linfoot

[The rest of Denis's report is in Digital Extra, p. 24]

Asylum Years

On 18 November, Bob Hayward presented an OHSCA-SEA local author talk about his book, co-authored with Andrew Heenan: *Asylum Years: Back to the Future? Glimpses of Institutional Life in the 1970s* (London: Free Association Books, 2025, £18.00). Rob's first-hand account, centred on Chartham Downs Asylum (as founded in 1875; latterly St Augustine's Hospital, closed 1993), attracted a full house and lively debate. Here we present a review of the book, written by OHSCA-OHC member Alison Culverwell – formerly NHS consultant clinical psychologist, and currently deeply involved with Bright Shadow, a local mental health charity.

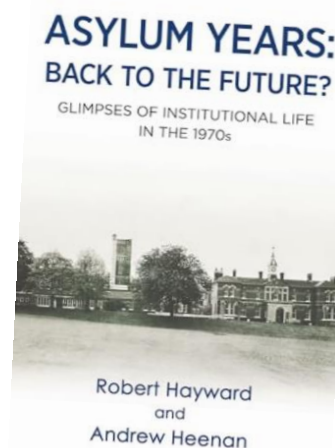
This is a deeply personal and compassionate book, yet it relates stories of inhuman practices and has universal elements. The idea was conceived by three old friends towards the end of the COVID lockdowns; a time when we all experienced containment and segregation – which, interestingly, emerge as key themes in the book. They had been student psychiatric nurses at St Augustine's Hospital in Chartham in the early 1970s. They began reminiscing about the individuals, staff and patients (or inmates as they were frequently referred to) and the practices and routines of asylum life. From this grew a desire to honour those whose lives had been

shaped by their years of segregation and containment, to ensure they were not forgotten and to present them in a more human light. Unable to trace previous patients, giving them a direct voice was impossible. Hence, we must rely on the memories of those who knew them, often the three old friends.

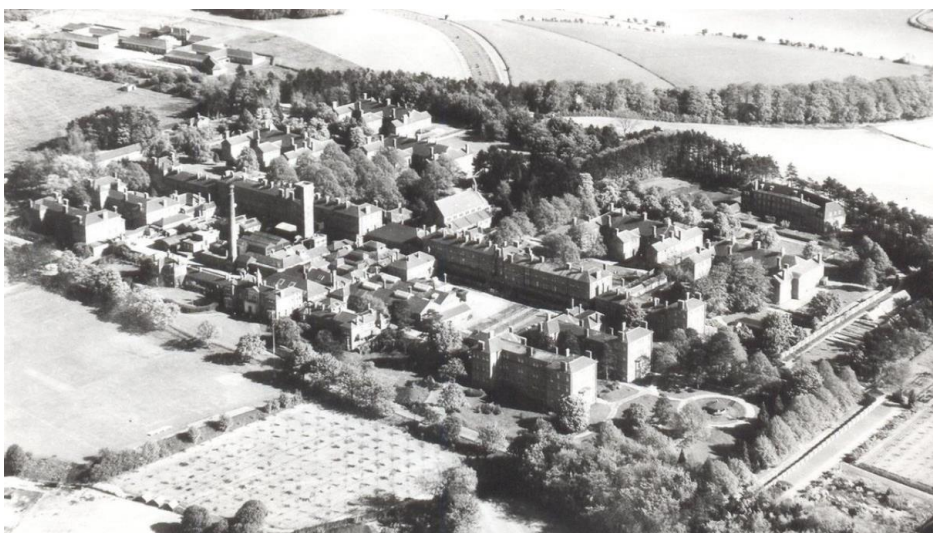
The book is largely a series of "tales" book-ended by a prologue – which provides a brief historical background

and helpful introduction to the medications and terminology of the time – and an epilogue addressing the impact of asylum life on the philosophy that underpins mental health care today.

The Forgotten Tales, focusing on the patients, are predominantly painful and disturbing, describing neglect, dehumanizing practices and blatant cruelty. But there is also gentle humour as in the story of a young woman experiencing a hypomanic episode who found a nurse's uniform and reported for duty to another ward. Some stories tell of ingenuity and playing the system, and we see a few moments of caring and kindness. The authors acknowledge the limitations and potential bias of the stories – those patients who were "characters" and events that were shocking (especially to "young, naïve and idealistic students") were more vividly remembered. But the reader is left with a very powerful reminder of how we can treat those who we "other" in ways that are morally and legally unacceptable.



Alongside these glimpses of the inmates' experiences are those of the staff and the practices of the institution. Rigid hierarchies permeate the institutional culture, and the ethos of segregation and containment applied to nursing staff as well as patients. Whilst student nurses held ward keys, they did not have keys to the nurses' home in which they lived, and where the communal TV was turned off at a prescribed time. Nurses' homes were segregated by gender as were the wards, dining areas in the staff canteen were segregated according to profession. Staff and patients' toilets and crockery were segregated. Safeguarding and responsible monitoring was minimal. The pharmacy assistant's tale tells of the pharmacy doors left unlocked, ward staff free to request unlimited refills of medications with no scrutiny, and this included whiskey, brandy, and Guinness which the pharmacy supplied for medicinal purposes. Examples of institutional neglect regularly emerge, whether the second-year student nurse left in charge of the whole ward, perfunctory staff recruitment practices, or staff complaints ignored. The authors argue keenly that it is not just the corrosive effects of the "total institution" which resulted in unusual and inhuman practices, but it is the "othering" of one section of society, those experiencing severe mental distress, who are deemed to be of less worth and less competent.



The tales of two individuals who did NOT view inmates in this way are illuminating. A domestic recounted: "I began to understand more and realized that they were not so very different as me, that they were not a race apart ... St Augustine's was a great place to work". The chaplain's daughter described roaming freely as a child, seeing the hospital as a "giant playground". Climbing over the roofs like Lyra in *His Dark Materials* and happily engaging with patients was her "normal". They did not experience the "segregation and containment" which underpinned the philosophy of the asylum.

This has been a compelling argument, and the authors have indeed given vivid glimpses into institutional life. Whilst the tales are located in St Augustine's Hospital the institutional practices, philosophy of care and individual's tales resonate with my own experiences in other asylums in other parts of England. It is unfortunate that there are no 'medical professionals' tales', given their position of power in the institution and the central role of pharmacology.

The first subtitle of the book, *Back to the Future?*, is addressed in the last 20 pages. The Community Care Programme of the 1990s and the closure of asylums is acknowledged as an essentially "Good Thing". However, they argue that this was woefully under-resourced and did little to destigmatize or desegregate those experiencing severe mental distress, although they acknowledge that "vast improvements" have been made.

"Today there are clearly more safeguards and the care of people with mental distress is not as hidden as in the past. Treatment and care are under much more scrutiny and exposed to the light, but does this mean that the plight of the mad person has necessarily changed much?"

These individuals are still "othered", mental health policy is still dominated by the medical discourse, and the survivor voice and movement typically has little impact. I would have welcomed further commentary on the legacy of the asylums – but maybe that is for their next book?

Alison Culverwell

The image of the St Augustine's site is taken from the *County Asylums* website@: <https://www.countyasylums.co.uk/>

SOCIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES GROUP (SEA)

SEA organises social activities and events to bring the community together. Reminders are sent out by mailchimp to members who have provided their email address to Peter Whisson (membership@ohsca.org). We welcome offers to help with activities, to join the SEA sub-committee, or any suggestions for future events. Please contact the SEA Convenor, Lorna Durrani, at social@ohsca.org.

SEA activities in 2025

Monthly coffee mornings: Coffee mornings continued every fourth Wednesday of the month, at the Hampton by Hilton Hotel, 7 St Margaret's Street, 11.00–12.00, apart from December. At the last coffee morning on 26 November, those present expressed a preference for the meeting to start at 10.30 am rather than 11 am. *The next meeting therefore will start at 10.30 am on Wednesday 28 January 2026.*

The Spring Party was on Friday 14 March, with Doreen Rosman as speaker. Although enjoyed by all who attended, and Doreen was excellent, due to low attendance it ran at a significant loss. It was therefore decided to discontinue holding the Spring Party in future.

Games Evenings at *The Phoenix* (which is expected to close, possibly for ever, in January) were discontinued because of poor support.

Special Walks: All well attended apart from the visit to see the Purple Emperor, probably because of the early start and distance involved.

- February 2025 Goodnestone Park to see snowdrops & hellebores & tea at The Tea Shop
- 26 April 2025 Bluebell Walk & lunch at The Granville
- 30 June 2025 Purple Emperor Walk at Dene Park, near Tonbridge.
- 22 July 2025 Guided Walk by Dick Vane-Wright in Westgate Gardens, followed by lunch.

The Summer Lunch Garden Party: Sue Lakeman and Peter Taylor-Gooby kindly hosted this year's summer lunch party on 28 July 2025. This was very enjoyable.

The Gardening Interest Group (GIG): Signed-up members of GIG are informed of local gardening events and can make use of the network for sharing information and getting gardening advice by contacting Alison Culverwell, Helly Langley, or Sue Hodge. The following events took place in 2025:

- 27 March 2025: Gardeners' Question Time & Seed Share at *The Phoenix*, 2.30 pm.
- 26 May 2025: GIG Plant & Produce Share at Dick & Hazel's house, 10.30–12.30.
- 20 June: 2025 GIG Visit to Godinton (near Ashford) to see the delphiniums. Poorly attended.
- 12 September 2025 Visit to Goodnestone on NGS open day.
- Three visits to members' gardens.

Weekly walks: These were scheduled to take place on Friday mornings at 9.30 am. There is a WhatsApp group set up so people can communicate in advance about whether the walk will take place. Anyone wanting to be in the WhatsApp group was directed to contact Lucy Fletcher-Jones. However, as no-one had attended for some time, it was agreed to discontinue these walks.

Talks: In 2025 we arranged five talks:

- 28 January 2025. Peter Taylor-Gooby about his recent novel, *Aspasia, the Immigrant Queen*.
- 14 March 2025. Doreen Rosman about Canterbury during the war years.
- 29 April 2025. Peter Donaldson about his book on the Sports Personality of the Year.
- 30 September 2025. Patricia Marsh on Aphra Behn.
- 18 November 2025. Robert Heywood about St Augustine's Hospital (see book review above, p. 5).

Informal Lunches: these were a new addition to the programme for 2025. The first informal lunch was held on Tuesday 5 August 2025 at *The Old Gate Inn*. Attended by 15 people, it proved very enjoyable. The second lunch took place on 11 November 2025 and was attended by 12 people. It was agreed to hold another lunch in the early part of 2026.

The Safari Sale was arranged for Saturday 16 August 2025, at three sites – but cancelled because of poor support.

Annual General Meeting: SEA supported the AGM by providing refreshments for the social part of the evening.

SEA Activities in 2026

The SEA sub-committee will meet on 19 January 2026 to plan events for 2026. We welcome any suggestions for speakers or activities. Please contact Lorna Durrani at social@ohsca.org. Our first event in 2026 will be a coffee morning on Wednesday 28 January, now meeting earlier at 10.30 am, at the usual venue, the Hampton by Hilton Hotel, 7 St Margaret's Street, Canterbury.

As well as the regular coffee mornings, informal lunches and GIG activities, we hope to arrange four talks: a talk and visit to the newly renovated Eastbridge Hospital (access permitting – which it may well not be); a talk and launch of the book about the *Kent and Canterbury Club at The Elms* by the OHSCA Local History Group; Martin Latham on his book *Kent's Strangest Tales*; and a presentation about KCC and the proposed changes affecting local government. We are open to suggestions for other talks. We are also planning a walk in Old Park, guided by Dick Vane-Wright (assuming he is mobile!). We will arrange a Summer Garden Party, and welcome any offers of people willing to host the party in their garden. Following a request from two members, we will reconsider whether or not to hold a Spring Party this year. If members suggest events, we will try and follow up on their suggestions.

Lorna Durrani, SEA Convenor (social@ohsca.org)

SEA sub-committee: Susi Brain, Alison Culverwell, Lorna Durrani, Helly Langley, Margot Leslie, Hazel & Dick Vane-Wright

BOOK REVIEW

I am very grateful to our book review instigator and tutor, the redoubtable O. Hill, for choosing a suitably 'Christmassy' book for New Year. Small Things Like These was first published by Faber & Faber in 2021. The following year it won the Orwell Prize for political fiction. Ed.

Small Things Like These – by Claire Keegan

As we step into the second quarter of the 21st Century, I thought I would ask what are considered to be the best novels in English to have appeared in the first quarter of it – those published between 2000 and 2025.

A title that comes up in several lists is the one above – I selected it, not necessarily to spotlight a potential future classic of literature, but out of curiosity, and hope.

There is a flaw in my design: since *Small Things* was published, and hailed as exceptional only in 2022, it has had fewer years either to fade in the memory or, on the other hand, grow in esteem in the laconic test of time compared to any work published 15 or 20 years ago.



I recognise this as an invalidating factor in the 'best novels' game – so let us just take the novel on its own terms, rather than as a participant in a competition.

A first and rather obvious thing to say is that *Small Things Like These* is short – slightly over a hundred pages. This, to my mind, makes it a novella rather than a novel. The second is the significance of the title – small things – the story is not probing deeply into issues (although these, concerning a powerful Irish institution, are in the background). The small things are the observations, actions and discoveries of the central character, Furlong, a middle-aged Catholic family man, happily married, with a trade as purveyor of coal and firewood to a modest country town somewhere near Waterford. The year is 1985 and the season is the run-up to Christmas.

If some of these little details suggest a descent, perhaps distant, from Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, the reference is relevant. Another Dickens work in the background is *Oliver Twist* – but I won't develop that, as it might give away some of the plot. Suffice to say that *STLT* is a suitable book to read at the time of year just passed – especially attractive if you feel nostalgia for how Christmases were experienced 40 years ago, and enjoy the *frisson* of snow-and-ice scenes contrasted with festive warmth and spirit. The story-telling is orderly, the descriptions are evocative, and the dialogue entertainingly Irish.

One should never expect fragmentary quotes from admiring reviewers on the back or inside cover of works to be dependable. Personally I would give this novel a recommendation, an undemonstrative thumbs-up. Whether it will continue to be read decades hence, I am not sure.

O. Hill

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Some members of the Local History Group (Maggie Bower, Mike Brain, Lorna Durrani, Marian Heath, and David Potter) have been working with David Steed, President of the Kent & Canterbury Club, to produce *The Story of the Kent & Canterbury Club at The Elms*. It is now at last with the printers. We will be arranging a launch of the book in 2026 (possibly in March).

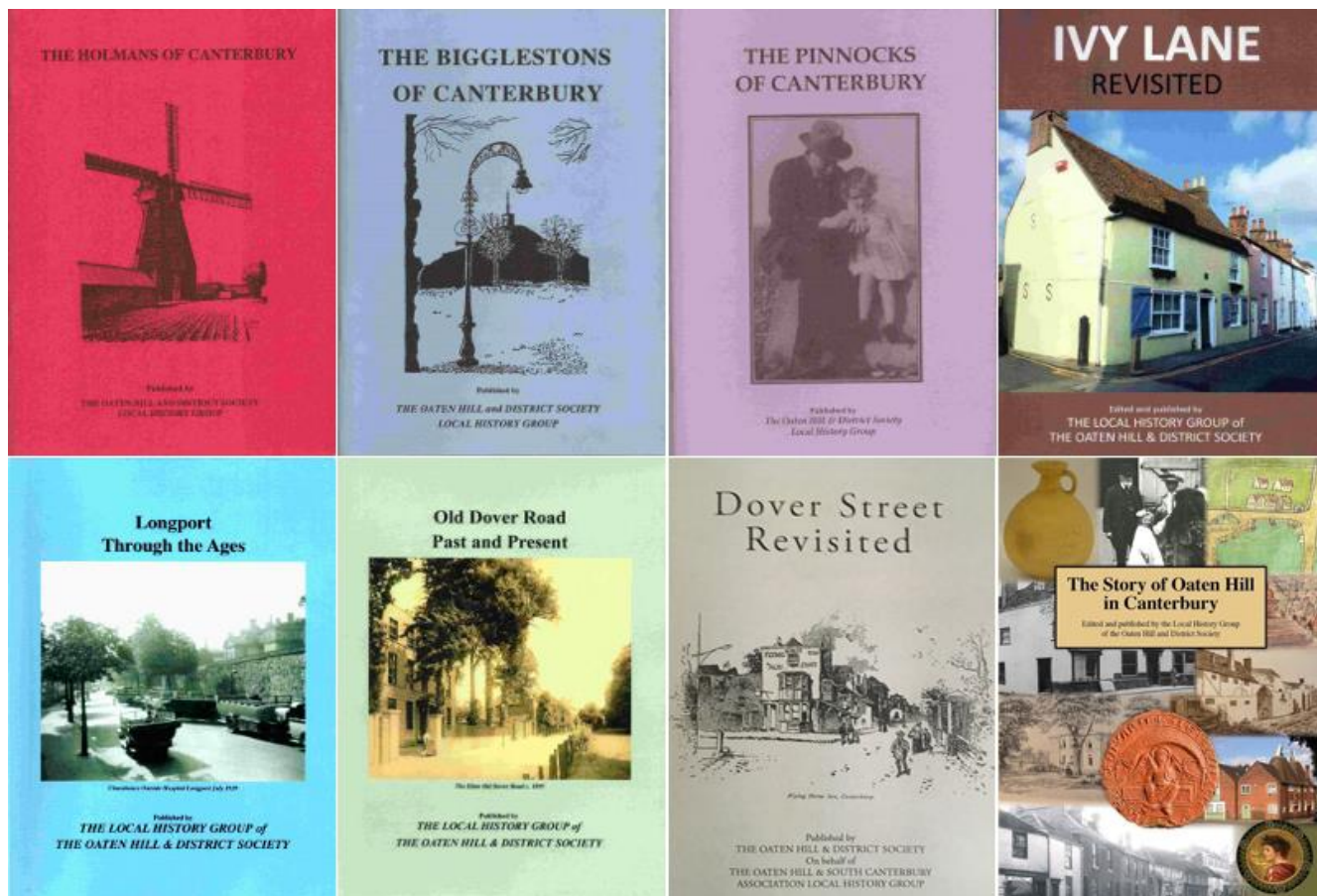
The Local History Group has published many books over the years that record and recall places and people who lived and worked in Oaten Hill. We continue to sell from a stock we hold and order reprints when necessary. All the publications are listed on the OHSCA website <https://www.ohsca.org/history.html>. Please contact Mike Brain on history@ohsca.org if you wish to purchase any of the books.

Of particular relevance at the moment, given the campaign and petition to save the Biggleston lampposts which are currently under threat of demolition by KCC, is the LGH publication, *The Bigglestons of Canterbury* (1996) price £5, available from history@ohsca.org.

A meeting to be held in *The Phoenix* at 2 pm on Tuesday 13 January 2026 will discuss the future strategy for the Local History Group. New members and returning members were encouraged to attend and share their ideas for the future.

At the recent AGM, Lorna Durrani was elected Chair, Mike Brain Secretary, and Maggie Bower Treasurer. Marian Heath continues as Archivist.

Lorna Durrani, Chair, Local History Group
history@ohsca.org



CANTERBURY CANTATA TRUST

Canterbury Cantata Trust became a registered charity in 2015. Its roots go back to 2010, when CCCU Professor Grenville Hancox, MBE, together with colleague Roger Clayton, established the first Skylarks – a singing group for people with Parkinson's, based on Grenville's research into the health benefits of singing.



In 2012, Grenville founded the Trust to champion the role of group singing in community life and to inspire younger generations to engage with their communities through meaningful, practical music-making. For this and more information, go to:

<https://www.canterburycantatatrust.org.uk/>



Within the work of the charity, the Amici Chorus is a core element, and several OHSCA members are active members of this special choir. Huw Kyffin's brief homage below was written immediately after Grenville's last public appearance as Leader of the Chorus – a truly wonderful performance that I was privileged to attend. Ed. [All images on this page © Canterbury Cantata Trust]

Reflections on Amici

On Sunday 9 November 2025, Grenville Hancox's leadership of the Amici Chorus came to a triumphant conclusion with a superb performance of Haydn's *Creation*. As a member of the choir, I'm not able to judge what it felt like for the audience but the responses I've received since do suggest that we did a great job to give Grenville a hugely deserved final concert.

I've been checking in diaries, to remind myself of all the wonderful music that we have sung over the past twelve or more years. Grenville set up Amici about the same time as he left his post as Head of Music at Christ Church Canterbury University. To begin with it was a fairly small choir; I remember there were only about six basses. We met in the All Saints Church near the postal sorting office, which had an unsympathetic acoustic. We

moved for a while to the Salvation Army Hall; and finally, to what became our home, in St. Paul's Church.

Anybody could join Amici; there were no auditions and many of us would freely admit that our ability to read music is minimal. There are also some very fine musicians in the choir who give the rest of us a lead and confidence to sing out. Thank you, Steve, Jonathan and others. We also have the utterly reliable accompaniment of Christopher Gower who exercises a calming influence on us all. After one performance, a friend of Grenville's congratulated him on how good we were and was astonished when Grenville told him we had no auditions. Grenville somehow managed to get us to sing great and difficult music to a high standard.

Over the years we have had many joyous experiences, including the Messiah, Faure's Requiem and Cantique de Jean Racine, Bach's St. John Passion and Magnificat, Vivaldi's Magnificat and Gloria, Brahms's German Requiem, and the South American Missa Criolla, as well as shorter pieces from many other composers. The list goes on. Grenville has managed to develop our singing from hesitant and error-filled beginnings to a level of performance that has moved and inspired us and our audiences. He has done this with a combination of insistence on high standards, while dealing with our mistakes in such a charming and humorous way that we can take the implied criticism and happily work to improve.

Personally, as someone who at about eight years old was told to keep quiet when we had singing in class as I "can't sing" but have always enjoyed singing the music I like, the experience of being able to sing such difficult and wonderful music has been an enormous pleasure. I can even reflect on that when, as a teacher of Maths, being confronted with students who "just can't do it", I can reflect my own experience of not being able to "do" music, but with support and attention have achieved something.

All of us in Amici owe Grenville an enormous debt of thanks. The Fortnum and Mason hamper we presented to him at our final Wednesday rehearsal was just a small token of how much we appreciated the amount by which our lives have been enriched by this extraordinary choir and its brilliant founder and leader.

Huw Kyffin



EASTBRIDGE HOSPITAL

Canterbury was a city of saints. Eighteen of its archbishops were canonised before the Reformation and the remains of many other holy men and women were collected from elsewhere and deposited in its monasteries and churches. Yet of its most famous saint, Thomas Becket (archbishop 1162–1170), no definite trace remains.

Nonetheless, many tens of thousands of people still visit Canterbury cathedral each year, as they have since shortly after Becket's murder by four of Henry II's knights in December 1170, perhaps to contemplate the site where he was martyred or to marvel at the medieval stained-glass representations of the miracles that were ascribed to him in the months and years following his death.

The Martyrdom – the crime scene itself – was substantially rebuilt between 1472 and 1487 in perpendicular style as part of a continuing struggle to accommodate pilgrims but separate them from the daily round of the monks of Christ Church. Nothing that can be identified with any certainty remains of the great shrine behind the high altar to which Becket's remains were translated, from the crypt, in 1220. That was completely destroyed on the order of Henry VIII in 1538.

Yet we are not solely reliant on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* in order to feel the presence of the pilgrims, who started to arrive in the city after the canonization of Becket in 1173, because of an extraordinary surviving building in the city's main street – 'Eastbridge Hospital' or 'the Hospital of Saint Thomas the Martyr'.

Henry VIII's commissioners and an earlier archbishop were convinced that the hospital – meaning 'a place of hospitality' rather than 'a place of treatment' – had been built by Thomas Becket, and given the saintly history of Canterbury that remains a possibility, but the first undoubted record we have concerning the building suggests that it was founded around 1180 by Edward son of Odbold, a wealthy merchant of nearby St. Peter's parish, for the benefit of poor pilgrims – a social stratum well below that of Chaucer's travellers.

It is a remarkable experience to step through the twelfth century archway from St. Peter's Street and then step further down into the undercroft of the hospital where pilgrims would have slept, two to a bay, on straw or rushes strewn over the stone floor. The River Stour flows on the west side of the undercroft so, no doubt, the floor would also have been damp or even flooded from time to time. In short, the accommodation would not have been comfortable, but it would have been better and safer than sleeping outside.

In times of plague, the dangers of sleeping here would have been high, as those that were in the initial stages of illness may have congregated in Canterbury in the hope of a miracle cure. The alarming number of 'masters' of the hospital in the fourteenth century seems to indicate that the senior administrators were not immune to the Black Death. This administrative complication was further exacerbated by the established right by the mid-14th

century of those who died in Eastbridge Hospital to be buried in the south precinct of Christ Church (the current cathedral) in close proximity to Becket's shrine.



Meals were provided for the pilgrims in the refectory above the undercroft and would have consisted mainly of potage – continuously boiled oatmeal or wheat porridge that might contain vegetables and, occasionally, fish or meat – together with bread and beer.

The refectory was completed a few years before 1200 and was originally two bays longer than at present, the remaining space having been used to construct alms-houses for female residents, or 'insisters', in the Tudor period. It is fortunate that the north end of hall survived later construction, as it is dominated by a 13th century *mandorla* of Christ in Majesty surrounded by the four evangelists that was discovered during renovation work in 1879. The extensive composition on this wall also included images of the murder of Becket, the public penance of Henry II (in July 1174), and the Last Supper, but all traces of these had disappeared by around 1900.



Lastly, before leaving for Christ Church and the shrine of St. Thomas, the pilgrims would have mounted a further set of steps leading up to the chapel. Though pierced by mid-14th century windows, the chapel was originally consecrated in the 1190s.

The rafters are a rare survival of a king's strut construction – the beams hang off struts hanging straight down from the apex of the roof – dating to about 1280. The second bay of the timber work is very complex and carried an octagonal belfry through the roof until this was cut down in the early 18th century.



The chapel (re-consecrated in 1927) was used as a schoolroom from 1569 to 1880 for the education of twenty poor schoolboys aged between seven and sixteen, and, remarkably, from the school's foundation the hospital has awarded two annual scholarships to Corpus Christi, Cambridge, that are still given today. It is rumoured that a young Christopher Marlowe may have been a student here before going on to the King's School within the cathedral precincts for a final year before going to Cambridge.

Several further additions were made to the current building after its foundation, including another rare survival – a chantry chapel dedicated to Our Lady built around 1363 and in 1375 consecrated by Simon Sudbury (archbishop 1375–1381). Chantry chapels were usually established for the remembrance of family members and this example was added for that purpose by Bartholomew of Bourne, who moved the chapel that had previously been established at Bekesbourne by his ancestor, James. The chantry priest was supported by the income from twenty-four acres of farmland at Bekesbourne and was also expected to support the spiritual needs of pilgrims.

A 1547 Act of Edward VI abolished all chantry chapels and seized their assets for the crown. Somewhat ironically, this particular chapel may have survived mostly intact because it was poorly built of chalk blocks and flint nodules that were not worth the effort of reusing for other construction. In the 1920s the chapel was in use as a wine store before being re-consecrated in 1969.

Soon after the translation of St. Thomas to the new shrine behind the high altar, the hospital began to accept a small number of lifelong dwellers, known as 'corrodians', who had given money or land in support of its charitable mission. Eventually this required further construction in and around the main body of the building, including, around 1405, a substantial timber extension across the River Stour that was subsequently modified several times to include rooms for recipients of alms (known as 'in-brothers') and, on the third floor, to house the school master.

If mention of these modifications suggests that the financial foundations of Eastbridge Hospital changed greatly over time, the impression is correct. After only a few years of operation it became clear that the original endowment of Edward son of Odbold was insufficient for the hospital's needs. Archbishop Hubert Walter (in office 1193–1205) made a further endowment in 1203, during the reign of King John, giving the tithes associated with several mills in and around Canterbury. At around the same time, the nearby Cokyn's Hospital was combined with Eastbridge and the former was closed creating for a brief period a single Hospital of St. Nicholas, St. Catherine, and Saint Thomas the Martyr.

Several major benefactors associated with the village of Blean also came to Eastbridge's aid in the early 13th century. The Norman lord, Hamo de Crevequer, gave land and the church of Blean to the hospital by a number of undated charters and several of his tenants did likewise with regard to land. In the succeeding centuries other landholders in Blean followed suit.

Yet by 1342 the hospital was in a parlous state and Archbishop John de Stratford (1333–1348) essentially re-founded the institution and laid down rules for its future management: healthy pilgrims might stay one night; sick pilgrims (excluding lepers) might stay until recovered; the right to burial in the south precinct of Christ Church was established for those who died at Eastbridge; pilgrims would be under the care of a woman over forty who would receive four pence a day to cover each pilgrim's expenses; there would be twelve beds available (eight for men and four for women); and poor women in childbirth could be taken in.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the golden age of pilgrimage had passed and such journeys to Canterbury ceased altogether with the destruction of Becket's shrine in 1538 leaving Eastbridge Hospital with no obvious purpose. Fortunately, Archbishop Mathew Parker (in office 1559–1575) converted the building into a hospital for poor travellers and soldiers and added the school.

For reasons not quite understood, Elizabeth I gave over the hospital to a private individual, John Farneham in 1576, but Archbishop John Whitgift (1583–1604) purchased and re-founded it in 1584 as an almshouse – adding two cottages to the rear of the building – in which status it has continued, at least in part, to the present.

Today, as one climbs up to exit the hospital through its gothic entrance arch and steps back into the glare of St. Peter's Street with its plastic, glass, and concrete shop fronts, it is heart-warming to look back and remember that at Eastbridge Hospital, we still also have a frontage that has survived that would have been familiar, more or less, to Chaucer himself on his visits long ago from London.

Nigel Fletcher-Jones

Trustee, Eastbridge Hospital, Charity No. 117727

The three images in Nigel's article here illustrate, in order:

The undercroft of the hospital in which the pilgrims slept.

The 13th century *mandorla* in the refectory of Christ in Majesty, surrounded by the four evangelists.

The king's strut roof above the chapel, dating to around 1280.

Three more images are included below, on p. 25.

OHSCA COMMITTEE 2025–2026 AND CONTACTS LIST

Chair and Vice Chair	Vacant (currently the Committee operates a rotating Chair)
Marion Bell	Hon. Secretary/main OHSCA Contact: 13 Wells Avenue, CT1 3YB; Tel. 01227 459 949; secretary@ohsca.org
Jane Pollok	Honorary Treasurer: treasurer@ohsca.org
Peter Whisson	Membership Secretary: 41B Dover Street CT1 3HQ (Tuition Canterbury); Tel. 01227 785 549 or mobile 07950 259 845; membership@ohsca.org
Lucy Fletcher-Jones	Website Coordinator/events bulletin alerts: website@ohsca.org
David Kemsley	ACRA rep./OHC subcommittee/Press Liaison: press@ohsca.org
Deirdre Hawkes	Green Team and Newsletter Distribution
Helly Langley	Tree Champion and Environment (litter)
Sophie Scott	Committee Member
Planning	Please contact secretary@ohsca.org for any enquiries regarding Planning. Preparation of regular planning application alerts: Keith Rishworth.
Local History Group	Chair LHG: Lorna Durrani, history@ohsca.org Secretary LHG: Michael Brain, tel. 01227 767 343; history@ohsca.org For information about Local History publications, email: history@ohsca.org – or go to OHSCA website: https://www.ohsca.org/history.html
SEA convenor	Lorna Durrani: social@ohsca.org (current members listed on p. 7)
OHC	David Kemsley, Alison Culverwell, Denis Linfoot (convenor), Dick Vane-Wright
Newsletter editor	Dick Vane-Wright: editor@ohsca.org

If you are uncertain who to contact, please direct your enquiry to the Honorary Secretary (contact details above).

- ACRA Alliance of Canterbury Residents' Associations
- OHC OHSCA HealthCare subcommittee
- SEA Social Events and Activities subcommittee

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Some useful contacts (many more were listed in the Spring 2025 edn: <https://www.ohsca.org/publications.html>)

- If you are concerned about security or have an urgent query and need to talk to the Canterbury City Council 'Out of Hours' team, their number is 01227 781 879. This redirects to CCC Control Room staff on duty 24/7.
- To report problems with noise or other antisocial behaviour, contact CCC's Environmental Health Team: envhealth@canterbury.gov.uk, or telephone 01227 862 429
- Matters regarding waste management, including fly tipping: <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/environmental-problems/report-flytipping>
- Housing issues, including HMOs with more than five people: <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/housing>



NATURAL HISTORY CORNER

We don't usually think of insects we associate with summer being active during the winter months. But, with our winters becoming, on average, ever milder, and the many different flowering plants now grown in suburban gardens offering pollen and/or nectar all year long, in some years a few of our more conspicuous pollinators can be seen on any warm day right through the winter months. One common species that can do this is the Buff-tailed Bumblebee (*Bombus terrestris*). This fine photograph of a buff-tailed queen was taken by Rob Veltman in his Cromwell Road garden in late November – so keep a look out for these large queen bees over the coming days and weeks. Times they are a-changin' – and at least some of our fauna and flora seem able to adapt.

Dick Vane-Wright

OHSCA DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Unfortunately, there are as yet few fixed dates for the coming months. The next four Wednesday Coffee Mornings (see page 6; **please note earlier time**) will be on 28 January, 25 February, 25 March, and 22 April 2026.

Note upcoming LHG meeting: Tuesday 13 January, 2 pm at *The Phoenix* (see p. 8).

The 2026 OHSCA **AGM** will take place at Kendall Hall on Friday 23 October.

DIGITAL EXTRA: NEW YEAR 2026

CONTENTS

Oaten Hill Mews Garage and Gerald “Freddie” Leslie Parsons	14
Cossington Road Lampposts – Birth of a Campaign	18
Environmental Protection	23
Illegal Waste Dumping	23
OHC (continued from page 3)	24
Improving Your Mental Health (puzzle)	24
Gallery	25
Minutes of 2025 AGM	27
Membership Form 2026	30

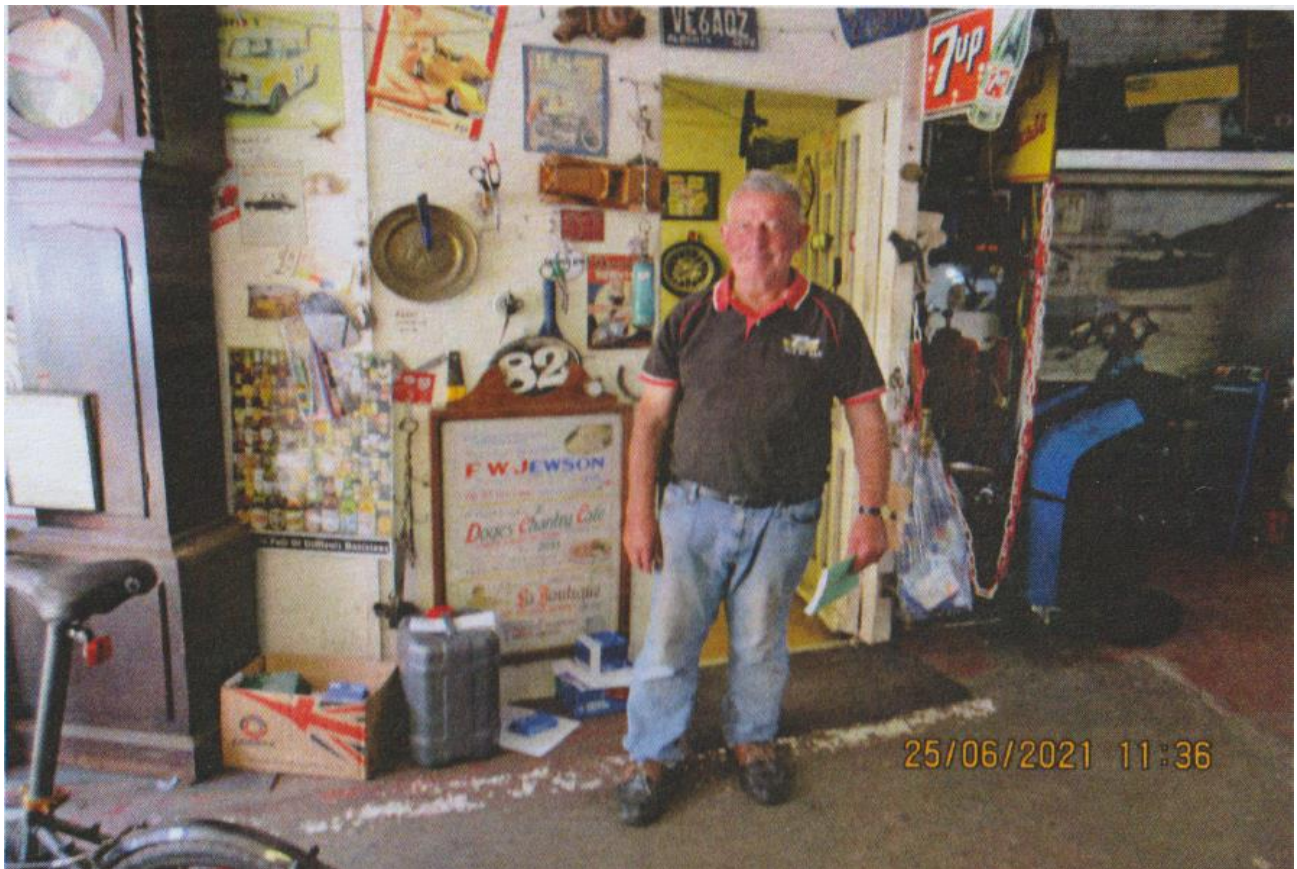
In compiling this edition, the Editor wishes to acknowledge his grateful thanks to all contributors, while noting special debts to Alison Culverwell, Lorna Durrani, Nigel Fletcher-Jones, David Kemsley, Huw Kyffin, Denis Linfoot, Marion Bell, Guy Mayhew, Jan Pahl, Rob Veltman and Peter Whisson. I will always consider unsolicited letters, articles or requests from OHSCA members – simply contact me via editor@ohsca.org. *Dick Vane-Wright*



OHSCA – always celebrating the wonders of the cosmos!

OATEN HILL MEWS GARAGE & GERALD “FREDDIE” LESLIE PARSONS (27 JANUARY 1952–2 OCTOBER 2025)

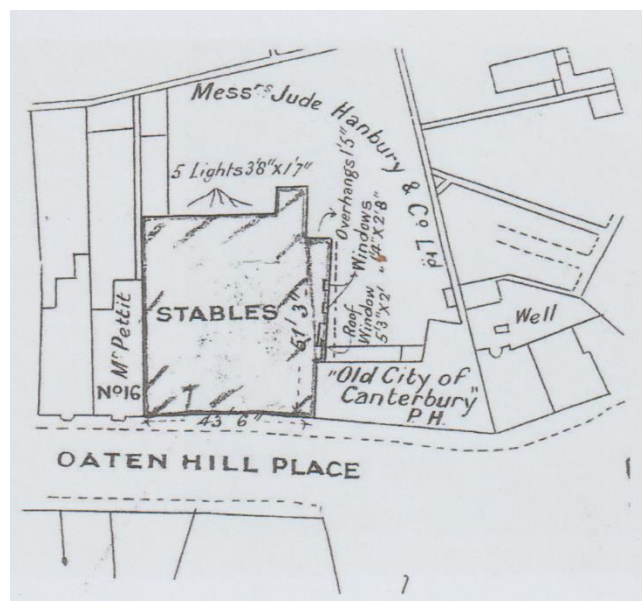
The recent death of Gerald Parsons, owner of the Oaten Hill Mews Garage, prompted this article to mark his passing, and recall the history of the garage in Oaten Hill.



The Oaten Hill Mews Garage has a loyal clientele who regard it as one of the best kept secrets in Canterbury. A recent review described it as 'The best garage in Canterbury! Completely trustworthy and 100% recommend. Good honest service with amazing honest prices. I wouldn't go anywhere else. A customer for life!' I personally can vouch for the excellent service my late husband and I enjoyed for our cars over the years.

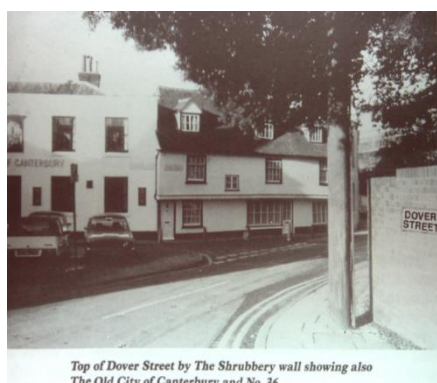


The map above shows Oaten Hill in 1843 (© <http://www.machadoink.com/St%20Georges%20Place.htm>)



From the deeds of Oaten Hill Mews garage.

Oaten Hill developed from an area composed largely of gardens and orchards in 1777, to a built-up area of houses with a few scattered gardens by 1883. Oaten Hill and Dover Street (formerly Dover Lane) are now largely residential with a few shops, restaurants, and student accommodation. Previously the area was dominated by the Cattle Market and the trades and professions that serviced it, including a large number of public houses, only one of which remains. The Old City Bar and Oaten Hill Mews Garage have been an integral part of Oaten Hill life for more than 100 years. Formerly called the Old City of Canterbury, the pub was built around 1830 and originally seems to have been two houses, later converted into licensed premises, with adjoining stables. In 1911 it was held by Charles Skam, Jobmaster and Licensed Victualer, born in Hackney. Skam had married a Canterbury woman, and his son Arthur was a cab driver who went on to run a substantial business, including a garage and a taxi company next door to the pub.¹ By 1927, Arthur was already tenant of the stables and operated from an office at no.1 Oaten Hill Place. The stables were sold to him for £750 by the brewery Jude Hanbury & Co. of Maidstone.



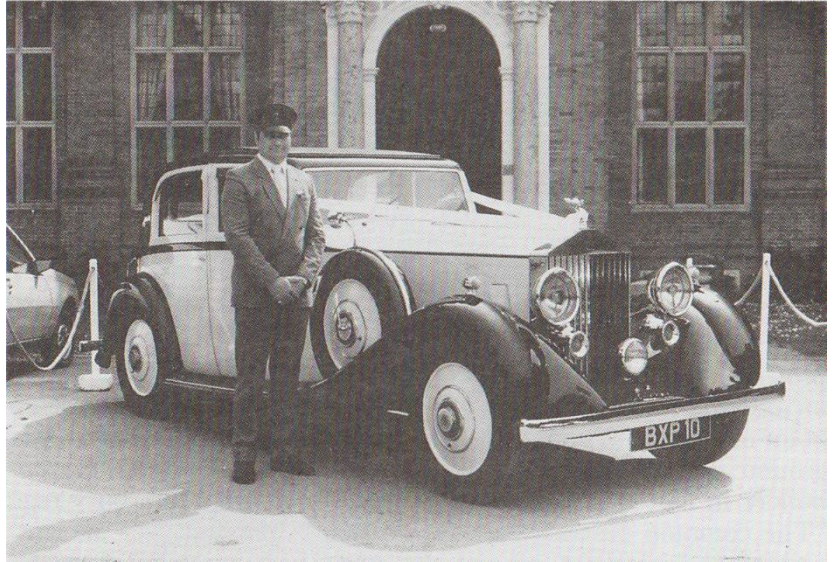
Top of Dover Street by The Shrubbery wall showing also The Old City of Canterbury and No. 36

Gerald Parsons recalled in *Dover Street Revisited* that "During Cricket Week in the old horse and cab days they did particularly well, often having to return to base to unload all the coins given as fares. Then he motorised his business and had a fleet of Rolls Royce cars for weddings, funerals and general hire. I think I am right in recalling that all the ecclesiastical, King's School and well-to-do were his customer ... As a man he was kind, easy going and hard working."²

Oaten Hill Mews Garage is adjacent to the Old City Bar and Nethersole House. Nethersole House was originally three cottages; it was later converted into an antique shop, and in 1989 into the home of the late Michael Steed, well known to OHSCA members. In the picture on the left, Nethersole House is the building to the right of the parked cars.



The corner of the garage is visible to the left of the pub.



One of the Rolls.



The stables adjoining the pub became a garage, leased in 1966 to Gerald Parsons Senior by Arthur Skam of The Shrubbery (3 & 4 Oaten Hill), whose taxi firm was a major feature of the district.³ When Arthur, finally living at 10 Oaten Hill Place, died in 1975, he left the garage to heirs who sold it in 1985 for £48,500 to Gerald Parsons, the father of the late owner Gerald (Freddie) Parsons,⁴ who continued to run it successfully as 'The Oaten Hill Mews Garage', until he died in October 2025. His son Martin will continue to run the garage with Tom and Dan, so maintaining the Parsons' family history with the Oaten Hill Mews Garage.





Acknowledgement is made to the following publications:

Dover Street Remembered. Oaten Hill & District Society, 1993. Note 1: page 23.

Dover Street Revisited. Oaten Hill & South Canterbury Association Local History Group (Oaten Hill & District Society), 2023. Note 2: page 5.

The Story of Oaten Hill in Canterbury. Oaten Hill & South Canterbury Association Local History Group (Oaten Hill & District Society), 2018. Notes 3 & 4: page 84.

Lorna Durrani, Chair, Local History Group.



Oaten Hill in 1941 (<https://www.ohsca.org/gallery.html>)

COSSINGTON ROAD LAMPPOSTS – BIRTH OF A CAMPAIGN

Following Guy Mayhew's introduction on p. 4, this special five-page section is devoted to the cast-iron lampposts – featuring the views of Cossington Road residents, the history of the lampposts, widening concern, and the growing campaign to safeguard what remains of Canterbury's Biggleston heritage.

Perception: the View from Cossington Road

Having spoken to most neighbours in Cossington Road about KCC's intention to replace all nine cast iron lampposts with modern ones, I received comments such as: "they can't do that, this is a conservation area"; "waste of money"; "replacing is not green". All said they wanted to keep our existing lampposts.

Modern lampposts serve the same function but major differences exist, especially where aesthetics are concerned. The decorative detail within the casting of our existing lampposts would never be equalled by any modern mass produced steel lamppost with plastic embellishments. Our lampposts are part of our local heritage and valued by us, they link us directly to Canterbury's history and to our industrial past.

We feel these old lampposts are an important aspect of Cossington Road's character. We knew before we moved here that we have a duty to look after the area because of its conservation status. If we sit back and allow this to be destroyed, then those who will come after us and occupy our homes will be denied first-hand what Cossington Road was like, without having to refer to images in books – or to photos which adorn the walls of places such as JD Wetherspoon!

At present, KCC could turn up anytime soon to remove our lampposts – but Residents here are on alert. We have been put in an awkward position where we would have to challenge any Contractor who arrives to carry out removal. As far as we are concerned, this matter is unresolved and discussions are still ongoing between Barton Ward councillors and Council Officials. This will remain the case until CCC finally acts to protect our heritage.

Jenny MacDonald, 14 December 2025

History: the Biggleston Lampposts of Canterbury

These beautiful cast-iron lampposts have graced the streets of Canterbury since the nineteenth century. They were made by Canterbury Iron Founders H.M. Biggleston and Sons Ltd. at their foundry behind the High Street, in Whitehorse Lane, and can still be found along the city wall by Dane John Gardens, and along St Dunstan's Terrace, Cossington Road, and Castle Street. Recently, I counted nine in Cossington Road, one of which is outside the former Doctors' Surgery at Cossington House. As can be seen in the photographs, it is leaning badly, and has been declared unsafe by Kent County Council. KCC propose replacing all the Biggleston lamps with modern steel versions. It is this lamp post that has resulted in a petition to save our remaining heritage lamps.



Design on lamp post

William Henry Biggleston

These decorative lamp posts are about ten feet tall with graceful swan necks supporting the lantern. They have a fluted base which has set into it a control door cover carrying an intriguing design, with the name of their maker H. M. BIGGLESTON & SONS at about eye level.

The firm was founded by William Henry Biggleston. Born in 1807 in Hayle, Cornwall, he was the youngest of four children; his father was drowned at sea. As a young man, William trained as an engineer at two firms in Cornwall, leaving the county in 1827 "for reasons known best to himself", and walked to London.

In 1835 he came to Canterbury, where he took lodgings at the Chance Inn, in Dover Street (later known as the Nag's Head). After taking a job at Pike's Foundry, he later went into partnership with John George Drury, and began business as "Iron and Brass Founders and Smith in General". The firm was to prosper for more than 120 years.

In December 1835 William married Sarah Attwood, the daughter of his landlord at The Chance, and had 9 children over the next 17 years. The business prospered, and they moved to acquire more houses and properties to house their foundry, machine shops and stores.

One of their first contracts was to make the clock face for the clock on the tower of St. George's Church in the High Street, Canterbury (image below: <https://www.canterbury-archaeology.org.uk/st-georges-church>). Although the church was largely destroyed in the 1942 Blitz, the tower and the clock can still be seen opposite Fenwick's. When William's grandson, Herbert Biggleston, came to Canterbury in 1906, one of the first things he did was to replace the bracket for the clock as the original one was thought to be unsafe.



In Canterbury the firm laid the city's original water main from a spring on St. Martin's Hill and made the lamp columns for street lighting. From 1794 the city had had 250 pavement lamps within the walls, which were lit every evening at sunset and burned until sunrise the next day. When electricity became available 100 years later, Canterbury was one of the first cities in the country to establish a public electricity supply for street lighting – initially generated at the Canterbury Electricity Works situated off Northgate, later resited to where Sainsbury's Kingsmead is now. In 1988 the Kentish Gazette reported that 220 of the pavement lamps survived around the city, the only losses due to being hit by vehicles rather than corrosion. That year, the City Council's Public Works Committee asked for the preservation of all these lamp posts within the city conservation area. It seems they were more concerned about preserving Canterbury's heritage than Kent County Council is today.

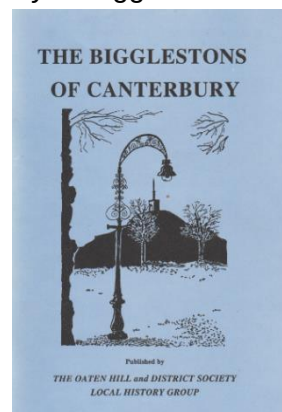


Drury and Biggleston lamp post on the City Wall above the old Cattle Market before the Second World War

The First World War brought changes to the work done by Biggleston's foundry, and they became a munitions factory, employing mostly women. And again during 1939–1945, much of the work done was in munitions. During this period, although the foundry only suffered "a few broken windows", the shop was completely destroyed. Both the foundry and retail side of Biggleston's continued for some years afterwards, but the foundry slowly declined, finally closing in early 1963. Thereafter, the foundry, machine and assembly shops, and stores were converted into what became Nason's department store. However the retail side of Biggleston's was still in business and survived for 22 more years. In 1955 a new building next to their corrugated iron hut in Upper Bridge Street (by the Odeon cinema) was completed, and opened the day before the old Cattle Market closed, on 14 March 1955. An extension to the shop was added in 1960, marking the 125th Anniversary of Biggleston's.

With the death of Mr Fagg, the General Manager, on Easter Monday 1986, Geoffrey Biggleston decided it was time to retire. The shop was closed down and the remaining stock auctioned off, in November 1986. The day before the shop closed, Mr. Boyce, who was one of the two directors with Geoffrey Biggleston, had walked to St. Margaret's Street for some shopping, where he fell down and died at the age of 92. All that remains now of the Biggleston's building is an Elizabethan door in Dover Street, and a few Elizabethan bricks in the wall. However we still have the many graceful Biggleston lampposts and the two Bigglestons Link signs, marking the service road and which were named by the City Council, at the instigation of the Oaten Hill & District Society, to remind us of the service rendered by Biggleston's to the City of Canterbury for over 150 years (1835–1986).

This information has been taken from The Bigglestons of Canterbury (Oaten Hill & District Society 1996) – which can be purchased by contacting history@ohsca.org.



Lorna Durrani, Chair of OHSCA Local History Group



The Nag's Head, 11 Dover Street (formerly *The Chance Inn*), circa 1910 (<http://www.dover-kent.com/Nags-Head-Canterbury.html>). Where William met Sarah, and the Biggleston family was founded in Canterbury.

Appreciation: Widening Concern

In October, KentOnline carried a report by Gerry Warren under the title *Campaign to save Victorian lampposts made by the Biggleston Foundry in Cossington Road, Canterbury*: <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/canterbury/news/its-a-shocking-waste-of-money-and-will-destroy-character-o-330614/>

Then, on 12 November 2025, *Country Life* magazine published an article *Lamppost plans cast dark shadow over Canterbury* in which Ptolemy Dean is quoted saying “I don’t think any other city in Europe would do this.”

Lamppost plans cast dark shadow over Canterbury

KENT County Council (KCC) is experiencing a backlash from Canterbury residents over its plans to replace some of the city's famous bespoke cast-iron, swan-neck Biggleston lampposts with modern steel replicas. The row erupted when surveyors in Cossington Road, which is in a conservation area, informed homeowners of the council's plans and, since then, local groups and individuals have bombarded KCC with complaints, with The Canterbury Society launching a petition and Canterbury City Council (CCC) councillor Charlotte Cornell also backing the protestors.

On its website, The Canterbury Society calls the move 'a needless act of cultural vandalism' and television presenter and society president Ptolemy Dean describes the scheme as 'daft and nonsensical... but in a way indicative of the blatant ignorance of local-authority contractors. It is a typically lazy and thoughtless procurement and irresponsible because there's an environmental cost to throwing away these things, as well as a heritage cost. I don't think any other city in Europe would do this'.

Biggleston lampposts are unique to Canterbury—there are currently 293—and they were even cast in the city centre, at the H. M. Biggleston & Sons' foundry, between 1835 and 1963. The city's status as an independent County Borough (until 1974) gave it a unique sense of civic pride in its design of street furniture.

In a letter seen by *COUNTRY LIFE* from Peter Osborne to Rosie Duffield, MP for Canterbury, the cabinet member for highways and transport states that, during an inspection in August, 'multiple faults were identified in the columns on Cossington Road, necessitating their replacement' and that 'it was concluded that refurbishment would not be practical or cost-effective'.

Over decades, the columns have been neglected, leading to rusting and this 'unsafe' status, although campaigners used the Freedom of Information Act to force KCC to divulge its methodology and refute the claims. Clive Bowley, chair of the St Peter's Residents' Association and lead for The Canterbury Society's Architecture, Planning and Streetscape Group, states: 'This is pseudoscientific methodology, but [the council] has still stated that the Bigglestons are a danger to the public. They don't seem to understand that cast iron is very durable and doesn't rust in the same way as steel, which eventually has

no structural integrity at all. Also, many of the Bigglestons are only 60 years old, which undermines the argument that they have rusted away.' Mr Bowley feels that, now the lampposts in Cossington Road have been condemned, the contractor will 'apply the same process to every lamppost in the city' and, indeed, the society believes between 15–20 have already been removed from Lower Broad Street and Wincheap.

‘No other city in Europe would do this’

Campaigners are also objecting to the conservation pattern lantern replacements. It's basically a tubular steel lamppost, with a piece of tube made into a swan-neck pattern, and bits of cast decoration bolted on, and all painted black when the Bigglestons are green,' says Mr Bowley. 'The contractor doesn't want the hassle of non-standard lampposts or something that has to be maintained.'

In terms of cost, the KCC estimate is £1,400 per steel column, or \$4,000 for cast-iron replicas, but campaigners are arguing that the Bigglestons don't need to be replaced—they simply need refurbishment, and, indeed, some have been maintained (at an estimated cost of only \$180 per post), both by locals out of their own pockets and some through CCC's \$20 million Levelling Up Fund.

Guy Mayhew, also of The Canterbury Society, which is appealing to CCC to invoke Article 4 Directions to remove KCC's permitted development rights, states: 'What's the point of all this levelling up money if we can't even preserve the very character that makes our city distinct?'

KCC failed to respond to our questions. Anyone wishing to object should contact CCC (www.canterbury.gov.uk) or KCC (www.kent.gov.uk).

An original lamppost at St Augustine's Abbey (above) and a new design (right)



If you want to read the original *Country Life* article, various ways of doing so, including access via *The Beaney*, are listed in an update from the Canterbury Society: <https://us13.campaign-archive.com/?u=3762bd110d82ab3709265602c&id=d9da6e73d8>

On 5 January, Ptolemy Dean was interviewed on BBC Radio 4: <https://www.canterburysociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Ptomely-Dean-Interview-5th-January-2026-BBC-Radio-4.mp3>

Ptolemy's broadcast is just part of what has become a flurry of interest in various media, including TV. To help us keep up, the Canterbury Society now has a page being updated about different coverage, as it happens. If interested, go to: canterburysociety.org.uk/streetlights/press



Image: <https://beno.uk/lamppost/esla.html>

Action: the Streetlights that Quietly Tell Canterbury's Story

Most of us walk past Canterbury's cast-iron streetlights without giving them a second thought. They simply belong. They line our streets, frame views of the Cathedral, and light the way home on winter evenings.

Look a little closer and you will see that many are stamped CCC, the former Canterbury City Corporation (prior to the City Council). These columns are not grand landmarks. They are something subtler and, in many ways, more important: the background detail that makes a historic city feel authentic rather than generic.

That is why residents across the city have been alarmed to see some of these columns removed and replaced with modern steel versions that look the same, whether you are in Canterbury, Crawley or anywhere else.

Are the old columns unsafe?

Despite what some rumours suggest, there is no evidence that Canterbury's cast-iron columns are suddenly failing en masse. Many have stood for decades. Some need routine repair, repainting or occasional replacement after damage, just as they always have. In many cases, refurbishment is entirely possible and relatively inexpensive. Removal is not the only option, and it should certainly not be the automatic one in historic streets.

How did we get here?

Part of the problem is structural rather than technical. Kent County Council looks after street lighting for safety and maintenance. Canterbury City Council is responsible for conservation, heritage and the character of the public realm. For years, there has been no clear, agreed approach to how historic street furniture should be treated.

When guidance is missing, practical decisions tend to default to standard, off-the-shelf solutions. They are cheaper, quicker and easier to maintain. That is understandable, but it is not how you safeguard a historic city.

What residents have discovered through detailed investigation is that this issue has been drifting for years without clear decisions being made. Only recently, after public pressure, has meaningful movement begun.

What has changed?

Thanks to a growing local campaign supported by residents, the Canterbury Society, and ACRA:

- more than 500 people have signed a petition;
- thousands have engaged online;
- and the issue has been raised publicly, including in national media.

As a result, Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council are now actively discussing:

- using Biggleston-style replica moulds already created for city projects;
- reviewing recent replacement choices;
- and agreeing a better approach for Conservation Areas.

This is encouraging. But momentum is important.

Why this matters beyond streetlights

Streetlights are just one example. The same issue affects paving, telecoms cabinets, utility works and other small changes that gradually reshape the city. Without clear standards, these changes happen piecemeal and quietly erode what makes Canterbury special. Heritage is not just about buildings. It is about the everyday details that give a place its identity.

How you can help

If you care about Canterbury's character, you can help by:

1. sharing the campaign with neighbours;
2. signing and sharing the petition;
3. and taking a look at the map showing how many historic columns still exist across the district (canterburysociety.org.uk/streetlights/map).

Once these details are gone, they are rarely brought back. With clear decisions and continued public interest, they do not need to be lost at all. Find out more, look at the map, support the campaign: canterburysociety.org.uk/streetlights (the poster is reproduced on the next page, with a live link for signing).

Guy Mayhew



SAVE CANTERBURY'S STREETLIGHTS

Our cast-iron “Biggleston” lamp columns are under threat.

Kent County Council is replacing Canterbury’s distinctive cast-iron streetlights — many still stamped with the old City crest — with generic steel poles.

Made locally by H.M. Biggleston & Sons, these elegant columns have lit Canterbury’s streets for over a century. They’re part of our city’s history — and could last another hundred years if properly maintained.

Why it matters

- These columns are unique to Canterbury and define its historic streetscape.
- Repainting costs just £180 per column - far cheaper than replacement.
- Once they’re gone, they can’t be replaced.

What we’re asking for

Canterbury City Council must:

- Issue an emergency Article 4 Direction to protect heritage streetlights.
- Require like-for-like replacements for any damaged columns.
- Develop a Public Realm Design Code for the historic city centre.

Add your name

 **Scan to sign the petition or visit the link below**



[is.gd/canterburylights](https://us13.list-manage.com/survey?u=3762bd110d82ab3709265602c&id=f45bf48805&attribution=false)



FINALLY on our historic lampposts, to sign the petition, go to: <https://us13.list-manage.com/survey?u=3762bd110d82ab3709265602c&id=f45bf48805&attribution=false>

PLANNING (continued)

The two pieces below continue David Kemsley's report (pp. 3–4 above). In addition to the issues David addresses in this edition, developments affecting the Town Centre Development Strategy and Broad Oak Reservoir are also progressing. Updates on all these matters will be presented in forthcoming newsletters. Ed.

Environmental Protection

All of us worry about conservation and protection of our natural environment, and each of us will have their own specific concerns. Mine are:

- Nutrient pollution in the Great Stour and Stodmarsh Lakes
- Illegal dumping of waste

I would be delighted to be proved wrong but as far as I can discern (and it is unacceptably difficult to get hard evidence), next to nothing is being done to **reduce** the pollutants already in the river. It may even be getting worse but I can't find any data.

I was told earlier this year that lead responsibility for tackling the problem rested four square with the Environment Agency. Now I am told by someone at CCC that Natural England is now leading on this – but either way, I can find no evidence of any *progress*.

In the meantime, Canterbury and Ashford councils have joined together to form Stour Environment Credits (SEC). SEC's role is to sell environment credits to developers wishing to proceed with projects which will, when complete, add to the nutrient pollution in the river. The idea is that with the income from the sale of those credits, SEC will commission a specialist company charged with implementing mitigation schemes which will, in effect, neutralise the polluting impact of the aforementioned projects.

It is to be stressed that SEC's role is one of impact neutrality rather than reduction. That task, as mentioned above, apparently now rests with Natural England. In the meantime, I have lodged a series of detailed questions with SEC about how it will operate in practice (particularly with respect to deliverability), and await a reply. [A reply received since indicates that we will need to seek further detail directly from Natural England.]

David Kemsley, 15 December 2025

Illegal Waste Dumping

The scale of this practice is alarming. Much money is being made by the culprits, in the secure knowledge that the scale of any consequential penalties will be insignificant. Compare that with the disproportionately large fines (in comparison to the feeble penalties for fly tipping and worse) handed out to individuals for minor transgressions – such as the lady in Hounslow facing a £1000 fine for leaving a cardboard envelope on top of a pile of other cardboard not placed in a bin (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0jd2l9e6epo>).

We were all horrified by what was allowed to happen at Hoad's Wood, now being cleared up at great expense to the taxpayer. I thought, because it was so shocking, it must be a one-off, but it is now clear that there are 'Hoad's Woods' all across the country.

Meanwhile, action by the authorities moves at snail's pace, with each organisation playing pass the parcel. No one is stepping up to take the lead. Matthew Scott, the PCC for Kent, recently described the problem as a Bermuda Triangle (<https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16452/html/>) – to which I would add the word grotesque.

The sides of the triangle comprise the Environment Agency, the Police, and Local Councils. Each waits for one of the others to take the initiative, whilst mountains of waste accumulate in the middle. It did occur to me that with such a clear diagnosis that one of the three sides of the triangle might be a tad proactive, but still the prevailing and continuing inertia plays into the hands of the illegal tippers. Some leadership from the Secretary of State to break the logjam is desperately needed.

Meanwhile in Canterbury, the owner of the Shelford MRF (Material Recovering Facility) has put in an application to the Environment Agency for capacity expansion. One impact will be up to 153 lorry movements along Broad Oak Road per day. Locals are concerned about this, as well as noise and air pollution. An objection is being lodged. Watch this space.

David Kemsley, 15 December 2025



"It's estimated some 30,000 tonnes of rubbish have been dumped at Hoad's Wood"
(<https://www.cprekent.org.uk/news/hoads-wood-minister-orders-environment-agency-to-pay-for-clean-up/>)

OHSCA HEALTHCARE GROUP (report continued from page 5)

Since its 2022 beginning, the Kent & Medway ICB's papers and meetings have (it seems to me) shown sustained efforts to improve the provision and quality of health services in its area; but they also show how hard it will be to ensure that the results of these efforts are sustained. Even over a short space of time (but much more, over decades), the increasing breadth and sophistication of medical treatments (and expectations for their availability) naturally increase the demand for resources. A similar increasing demand for resources is seen throughout our nation's financially competing services and infrastructure; examples proliferate, ranging from potholes, to water supplies, to law courts and prisons – and latterly, to defence. But our national resources do not keep up with this ongoing incremental demand.

So the NHS 10-year Plan seeks, very reasonably, to stretch the resources it hopes to get, by AI, digitisation, and the rest of its 'three shifts' (moving care "from hospital to Community"; "from paper to Digital"; by "focus on Prevention.") Prevention (acting and encouraging action by the whole population, or sectors of it, to reduce risks to health and life) is essentially broad-brush (asking "what percentage of a particular population is going to get this ailment", not "Is your neighbour Jack, or your daughter Jill, going to get it?") – 'Public Health', in fact. Of course it is an essential technique, but the 10-year Plan associates it with an increasing expectation that individuals should take responsibility for their own health, and make their own individual case, though digital channels, for health professionals' attention.

In parallel with this, the availability of many clinical tests has latterly come under stricter clinical control. Of course decisions about availability have always been a potentially contentious matter; one of the earliest of the functions of NICE (the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence), set up in 1999, was to harmonise the provision of treatments across the country – to eliminate the 'post-code lottery' (which could also be called the freedom to exercise local priorities and discretion). NICE has acquired a wide range of advisory roles since 1999; perhaps, as the 10-year Plan unfolds, it will become embroiled in renewed outbreaks of the "war of Jennifer's ear", which entertained the electorate in 1992.

As noted on p. 5 (above), the ICB's November meeting included a 'Focus' item on Digital Data; the members of the public attending online were invited to ask questions, and the first point raised was about 'digital exclusion', suggesting that while the 'three shifts' assume that as the non-digitally-skilled part of the present-day population is largely elderly, it will soon have died out, there is a younger population, excluded from acquiring not only digital competence, but also digital equipment, not by age but by poverty. So a cohort without digital skills or access can be expected to remain in long-term existence. The ICB Board members made no very distinct response to this point.

Denis Linfoot, 22 December 2025

STOP PRESS: Wes Streeting has announced further details for the proposed online hospital. This new service, which will initially focus on menopause, prostate and eye conditions, is intended to allow patients to have assessments, check-ups and follow-up appointments online, and is expected to have its own dedicated team of doctors:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c62w3wr92np0>

IMPROVING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH – MARION'S NEW YEAR PUZZLE!

There are 16 East Kent towns, villages and hamlets hidden in this text. Can you find them?

THE SHOPPING TRIP

"It's amazing what they sell in garden centres these days. Which set would you like to pick?" Hamish asked his wife. "Why don't you try the seat on this chair?"

"That set is way too flashy. The one over there looks ideal."

Hamish handed over cash for Diane's fashionable garden furniture and plants.

Back home she was very pleased with her new table and chairs and the seeds and hybrid geraniums she'd bought.

"When are you going to start planting and sowing?" Hamish asked.

"Not until the New Year, darling, as I must go round the garden to note where to plant them. But first, what would you like for dinner, salad or spaghetti?"

"I'd love the pasta, please."

GALLERY



Upper left: The only Purple Emperor (the UK's second largest butterfly) we got close to at Dene Park on 30th June (p. 7) was reluctant to reveal its stunning purple upperside (photo taken on the day by William Malpas, Butterfly Conservation Kent Branch). Note wonderful yellow proboscis. **Upper right:** some of those gathered for the first informal lunch at *The Old Gate Inn* (p. 7). **Centre and lower:** more images of Eastbridge Hospital (pp. 10–11). **Centre left:** The timber-built, brick-faced extension over the River Stour, begun around 1405. **Centre right:** Two pilgrims would have slept in each bay of the undercroft, on hay or rushes. **Lower:** The rear of Eastbridge Hospital showing the building across the River Stour and, to the right, the Tudor cottages used as almshouses. Will the river be its nemesis? (p. 2).



The drizzle mostly holding off, those gathered at Peter and Sue's lovely home and garden for the 2025 *al fresco* Summer Party (see p. 7) had a great time. Guests included Joanna and Stephen, itinerant choristers from Virginia, part of the choir performing evensong at the Cathedral that week.

MINUTES OF THE 8th OHSCA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

FRIDAY 24th OCTOBER 2025

HELD AT KENDALL HALL, ST MARY BREDIN,

59 NUNNERY FIELDS CT1 3JN

Attendees: Denis Linfoot, Keith Rishworth, Rena Boothe, Deirdre Hawkes, Hazel Vane-Wright, Dick Vane-Wright, Marian Heath, John Heath, Cathy Sales, Bert Leslie, Margot Leslie, Hilary Adams, Susanne Hasselbach-O'Bryne, Jennifer MacDonald, Allen MacDonald, Nigel Fletcher-Jones, Mike Brain, Maggie Bower, Carole Denham, Jeff Derham, Alison Culverwell, Sarah Whittall, Rob Veltman, Lorna Durrani, Kathryn Dobrashian, Tom Dobrashian, Steve Raffe, Harry MacDonald, Diane Billam, Daphne Reeve, Jackie Barber, Len Hinksman, Su Cumber, Jackie Eales.

Committee members – David Kemsley, Lucy Fletcher-Jones, Helly Langley, Peter Whisson, Marion Bell.

6.45-7.20 pm – Social Gathering with refreshments provided and served by SEA members Alison Culverwell, Lorna Durrani, Helly Langley, Margot Leslie and Hazel Vane-Wright. Many thanks to them.

7.25 pm AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies: Sophie Scott, David and Gwyn Hartwell, Tom Lynch, Jane Pollok, Deborah MacVean, Glyn and Bill Burnett, Judy Seymour-Ure, Jane Carey-Harris, Madeleine Richardson, Michael Reeve, Susi Brain.

2. Minutes of AGM held 27th October 2024

These were agreed without amendment.

3. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes

4. Annual Report from the Acting Chairs

David Kemsley represents OHSCA on ACRA and reported the three current issues facing South Canterbury:

1. The Draft Local Plan in which changes have been made and the planned housing in Blean has been dropped resulting in substantial additional housing for East and South Canterbury. The Plan now proposes a great swathe of housing from Thanington, across Mountfield Park (now South Canterbury Development) to the A257 Littlebourne Road. David urged members to read the excellent submission from the Canterbury Society. OHSCA's objections were included in ACRA's. The consultation period has ended and it will following a Section 19 final publication next year be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate for scrutiny. The problems of water, sewerage and traffic remain unresolved.

2. The South Canterbury Development (Mountfield Park) – the developer, Gummer Leathes, continue to make their preliminary infrastructure investigations and hold open briefing sessions, which members are encouraged to attend.

3. Cossington Road Lampposts – local residents were alerted to Council plans to remove the old solid Bigglestons lampposts and replace with cheap tacky copies. If this went ahead it would set a precedent across the City resulting in widespread loss of our heritage lampposts.

Marion Bell thanked Committee members: Helly Langley (litter), Jane Pollok (treasurer), Peter Whisson (membership), Lucy Fletcher-Jones (website and IT) and Melissa Hill who stands in when Lucy is away, and David Kemsley (ACRA rep). Also everyone in the sub groups: SEA, LHG, OHC. Dick Vane-Wright for editing our quarterly newsletter and for creating the evening's power point presentation. Deirdre Hawkes and Peter Whisson were thanked for collecting, collating and distributing the newsletter and thanks to all our deliverers. Marion also thanked Deirdre (Gardening), Keith Rishworth (planning alerts), Denis Linfoot (OHC rep) and Marian Heath (LHG archivist for creating the history board. Hilary Adams was thanked for again certifying our year end Accounts.

Without the continuing support of everyone, including the members themselves, OHSCA could not carry on.

David kindly thanked Marion (Secretary).

5. Annual Report from the Treasurer (copy of Accounts filed with these Minutes)

Jane Pollok was unable to be at the AGM and submitted an explanatory report should queries arise. There were 209 paid-up members by 31st August. She sent her sincere thanks to Hilary Adams for certifying the Accounts.

6. Approval of certified Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2025

The Accounts were certified by Hilary Adams, signed copy filed with these Minutes. A copy will be put on the website. We are very grateful to Hilary and she has been presented with a thank-you gift.

7. Annual Report from Membership Secretary

Peter Whisson reported the latest membership figure at 233 households several renewals having been received since the year end 31/8/2025. Peter is happy to receive renewal subs and donations at his business address at 41b Dover Street.

8. Annual Reports from Special Interest Groups

Local History Group – Maggie Bower’s full report will be emailed to members. The Group is currently working on the History of the Kent and Canterbury Club for its next publication.

Green Team – Deirdre Hawkes reported that she is now getting some professional help to tackle overgrown shrubs. Sophie Scott has kindly donated tulips which will be planted in November.

SEA – Lorna Durrani’s full report will be emailed to members. The Group continues to organise coffee mornings at the Hampton by Hilton in town and has started to arrange informal lunches at the Old Gate Inn. The next local author talk will be by Robert Hayward about St. Augustine’s Hospital on 18th November.

OHC – Denis Linfoot continues to update members fully in his newsletter reports.

Newsletter - Dick Vane-Wright has continued as our newsletter Editor for 2025. Every edition is packed with local information and the digital version has additional pictures and commentary. It has been agreed to distribute a flyer to non-members again at New Year.

9. Recommendation regarding annual subscription

Jane Pollok recommended that the annual subscription for 2025-26 remains unchanged at £5 but it is always subject to review.

10. A Proposal for Revisions to the Constitution.

No revisions were proposed.

11. Nominations for Officers and Committee 2025-26

The nomination papers for 8 applicants are filed with these Minutes.

12. Elections for Committee members 2025-26

The following were unanimously elected en bloc to form the next OHSCA Committee.

Chair –

Vice Chair –

Hon Treasurer – Jane Pollok

Hon Secretary – Marion Bell

Membership Secretary – Peter Whisson

Committee Members: Lucy Fletcher-Jones, David Kemsley, Helly Langley, Sophie Scott, Deirdre Hawkes.

Hilary Adams was nominated as Auditor for 2026.

The Committee will continue to operate a rotating Chair.

13 Any Other Business

There was no AOB

14. End of formal meeting.

“The New Historical Atlas of Canterbury”

presented by Professor Jackie Eales

President British Association for Local History and Canterbury Christ Church University

Jackie told members how she has already been involved with the creation of “An Historical Map of Canterbury” in conjunction with CCCU, Canterbury Archaeological Society and Historic Towns Trust. Now, with help from these bodies, additional funding and students from UKC and CCCU, she has taken on the task of creating The New Historical Atlas of Canterbury. It will cover the period from the Roman occupation up to the end of the 1800s.

She talked about her sourcing information from a 1640 map in the Cathedral archives and books by historians William Sumner, William Gostling, Edward Hasted and William Urry. She also found David Potter’s research into St. Sepulchre’s Nunnery in our History Group’s publication The Story of Oaten Hill very useful. She thanked OHSCA for their donation towards her work.

We all look forward to the Atlas being available in shops next year.

Jackie answered questions from the audience and was then thanked by David Kemsley and presented with a thank-you book token

David thanked everyone for coming and the SEA group for providing the splendid refreshments.

The Meeting closed at 9.00pm.

Marion Bell, Honorary Secretary



OHSCA AGMs are not conducted through rose-coloured spectacles, but in the lurid glow of Kendall Hall’s infra-red heaters! Top row for 2025: Alison and Helly hamming it up; Marion and David getting serious; Mike on his sales pitch; Marian’s archival display. Lower: Reena and friends waiting; Bert at the Bar (inset).

OATEN HILL & SOUTH CANTERBURY ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP FORM 2026 – **NEW MEMBERS**

First name & Surname – of all those to be included as Members within a single household	Email address – if you wish to receive notifications by email (see below*). Maximum of 2 per household.

Please write your **household postal address**, with postcode, and telephone number, here:

Please indicate your **local concerns and interests**; can you offer us any help?

***Email** – please ensure we have your up-to-date email address(es), as we use email to send:

1. weekly planning applications bulletin, and occasional notices of social events, appeals, etc.
2. a digital copy of the full quarterly newsletter (downloadable pdf, in colour)
3. put 'X' in box if you want a **printed copy of main section of the newsletter**: ☐

PAYMENT

HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (One annual £5.00 payment per household)	£ 5	NEW MEMBERSHIP – <u>either</u> complete this form & send with Cash or Cheque , payable to Oaten Hill and South Canterbury Association, to: Peter Whisson OHSCA Membership Secretary, 41B Dover St. (Tuition Canterbury), Canterbury, CT1 3HQ or email membership@ohsca.org to request simple instructions
VOLUNTARY DONATION (toward e.g., general funds, trees, bedding plants, social events, history group, etc.)		
TOTAL PAYMENT:		

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

If your details have not changed, simply send payment in **Cash**, or **Cheque** payable to Oaten Hill and South Canterbury Association, to Peter Whisson at the address above, or pay by **Bank Transfer** to **NatWest, Sort Code 60 04 27, Account number 90612094**.

- a) With cash or cheque please include your name & address; any sum over and above £5 will be regarded as a voluntary donation.
- b) With a bank transfer please specify **SUBS**. If you are kindly making a donation at the same time, any amount above £5 will be treated as a donation (not e.g. a subscription for a following year). **Please be sure to give the first line of your address as the reference.**
- c) Members renewing are requested, if possible, to pay their £5 subscription by 31st January 2026.

On renewal, if any details need to be amended, please contact Peter direct, with your instructions.

PRIVACY NOTICE (DATA PROTECTION)

1. OHSCA undertakes to hold members' personal details securely.
2. Details, including email addresses, will be held solely to ensure effective communication with households while OHSCA Membership is maintained.

COMPLETED FORM – by attachment to membership@ohsca.org, or print and send to address above.
 On the OHSCA website (<https://www.ohsca.org/>) you can find this form in pdf, Word, and rtf formats.