

OATEN HILL & SOUTH CANTERBURY ASSOCIATION



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

digital edition

JUNE 2026

No. 39

WILL IT BE AN ENGLISH SUMMER?

... sometimes defined as “three fine days and a thunderstorm”. Welcome to OHSCA Newsletter no. 39 – Summer 2026 – when heat and water could be issues. But as spring turned to summer, the city walls literally blossomed ...



VIBRANT NEW CITY WALL WILDFLOWER PLANTING – visible from OHSCA ‘territory’ (e.g. Old Dover Road; Rhodaus Close), 28 May 2026

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This edition raises serious issues about water, including a heartfelt plea from David Kemsley, and the current consultation on community governance. Recently, the Canterbury Society and ACRA have both responded in detail to the now closed Council Draft Local Plan Reg. 19 public consultation. Their responses are accessible on the Society (<https://www.canterburysociety.org.uk/>) and OHSCA websites, respectively. On a more light-hearted note, SEA remains very active, while O. Hill writes about strange goings on at Canterbury West.

Stewart Ross, Chair of the Canterbury Commemoration Society, has kindly agreed to speak at our AGM (23 October) "about CCS and its current projects, one of which is a toleration memorial in the grounds of the renovated Castle, dedicated to Michael Steed". CCS is a registered charity that aims to "advance public education in the events and people in Canterbury's history", and "preserve, protect, develop and improve features of aesthetic, artistic or historical interest".

I can now give more detail about Canterbury-based dementia charity Bright Shadow's recent award – £400,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund. This represents about a third of the funds needed over the next three years to continue the charity's mission of using the power of the arts to support those living with and affected by dementia, and help them thrive.

Many residents attended a recent garden party in Ethelbert Road organised in support of Bright Shadow, and will be delighted to learn that over £3,000 was raised. If you wish to support the charity's work further – which has been independently shown to reduce loneliness, boost mood, support carers, and change the course of 'dementia journeys' – do consider making a donation or legacy, volunteering, or taking part in sessions. More information can be found at www.brightshadow.org.uk, or by calling 01227 467272.

SOPHIE SCOTT

Very sadly, I have to report that Committee member Sophie Scott died on 13 June, after a long illness. Sophie was an exceptionally active supporter of both OHDS and OHSCA, and will be greatly missed. Tributes will appear in the Autumn newsletter.

Dick Vane-Wright (editor@ohsca.org)

MEMBERSHIP

With the majority having paid their subscription for the year by the middle of April, the membership desk in recent weeks has been relatively quiet. If you are receiving a reminder to pay with this Summer edition of the Newsletter, it may be that you have yet to get round to it – or it could be an error (with 200 households, give or take a few, there is always room for that). An email or a phone call to me should easily clear it up.

The methods of payment are by cash, cheque (to OHSCA) or online transfer. For the last of these the details are as follows: OHSCA; Sort code 60-04-27; Account no: 90612094. OHSCA does not accept crypto – but then no one has made an approach.

Please study the summer calendar of upcoming events. The team that comprises the Social Events and Activities committee works assiduously to bring these about and make them smooth-running. Appreciation is best shown by our turning out and sharing the fun.

Peter Whisson, Membership Secretary.

membership@ohsca.org

WEBSITE AND EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS

OHSCA sends out email notifications to provide details, updates and notices of events. You can receive the full colour Digital Edition newsletter too, but only if we have your email address – if we do not have it, or it needs updating, please do contact the Membership Secretary.

Our website (<http://www.ohsca.org>) provides much additional information, and is also an archive, giving access to previous newsletters and pictures. Updated monthly, it includes a helpful events diary. I always welcome photographs and other interesting items from Members that could be included.

Lucy Fletcher-Jones (website@ohsca.org)

OHSCA website and Events bulletin alerts

GREEN TEAM



Milton Road, 12 June 2026

At the time of going to press, Helly Langley was organising a litter-pick (20 June). The Green Team is always concerned with its three gardens – at St George's Place (currently inaccessible), the Fire Station, and 'Milton Road.' This last is an unadopted track that runs between South Canterbury Road and Cromwell Road. After much sun and rain, Milton now needs a lot of work to keep it in check, and attractive. If any new volunteers could spare some hours to help look after it, I am sure Deirdre (greenteam@ohsca.org) would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Ed.

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Against the still unresolved background of the new unitary council to which Canterbury will eventually be allocated (see OHSCA Spring Newsletter, p. 3), CCC has instigated a Community Governance Review – with the strapline “have your say on local representation”. This will take place in two stages:

- **Stage one** (current consultation): CCC is gathering views on existing parish arrangements and areas that lack parishes, and inviting ideas and proposals for change. The responses to this consultation will be used to help shape draft recommendations for the area.
- **Stage two**: CCC will then consult on specific draft recommendations before finalising any decisions

Stage 1 responses must be submitted, via this online link, by midnight Sunday 5 July:

<https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/consultations/community-governance-review-have-your-say-on-local-representation/>

Some members attended a talk organised by SEA on *Local Government* on 21 April, presented by Richard Norman. One of Richard’s several ‘hats’ is that of being Secretary of St Michael’s Road Area Residents’ Association. On behalf of SMRARA, Richard recently submitted their collective response to Stage 1 – which, very graciously, their Association has given us permission to include here:

This is a submission to Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review from St Michael’s Road Area Residents’ Association ... We work to promote cooperation and a sense of community among our residents for mutual benefit, including fostering good relations with the large number of student residents in the area.

In this work we have benefited from good working relationships with Canterbury City Council. We have greatly valued the commitment of our local CCC and KCC councillors, and support from council officers. We recognise that, with the demise of CCC and KCC and their replacement by an East Kent unitary authority, this will become more difficult. Although we will still be represented by our elected representatives on the new authority, they will have to cover a larger area than the existing CCC ward and will have more extended responsibilities and less time for our local concerns. Whatever its particular geographical configuration, the new local authority will inevitably be more remote.

We therefore welcome the current Community Governance Review, and its commitment to assess governance arrangements at the most local level. We note that this includes the question whether the city of Canterbury needs any different arrangements such as a new town or parish council. Our SMRARA committee has discussed this and would welcome the opportunity for local residents, in the Stage 2 consultation, to give their views on the option of a new town council. We assume that our members will have a range of views, but we think that the option of a new town council deserves serious consideration. It would mean that we would have elected representatives who could provide us with valuable support, could access limited funding to help our work when appropriate, and could also act as intermediaries between our Association and the East Kent unitary authority. We would also suggest that there should be scope, in Stage 2, for consideration to be given to any

proposal for parish councils for separate parts of Canterbury as an alternative to a town council for the whole of the city.

We ask that these options should be consulted on in Stage 2 of the Community Governance Review. We would, in Stage 2, aim to help provide our members with the information they need in order to make an informed judgement.

As became evident on 21 April, there is little doubt that individual members of OHSCA will, to quote the above, “have a range of views” – but some at least certainly “think that the option of a new town council deserves serious consideration”. If you have opinions, *for or against*, or wish to propose any particular solution regarding the issues at stake, do make your views known to the Council now – you have until Sunday 5 July to do so. Ed.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE – BUT NOT A DROP TO DRINK?

At times during the winter it seemed as if it might never stop raining. But according to Google AI:

East Kent is one of the driest parts of the UK, with historical rainfall (approx. 600–750 mm) far below the European average.

If you then ask “Is the human population density of Kent UK above or below the average for western Europe?”

Google AI responds:

The human population density of Kent, UK, is significantly above the average for Western Europe ... Kent Population Density: Approximately 462–517 people per square km (depending on whether the definition includes the Medway unitary authority). Western Europe Average: Approximately 180–184 people per square km.

Follow this by asking “Is the human population density of Kent UK rising or falling in relation to the rise or fall of the human population of the UK as a whole?”, the answer forthcoming is:

The human population density of Kent is rising in relation to the UK as a whole, growing at a faster rate than both the regional average for the South East and the national average for England.

Some years ago the planning application for the 4000 home South Canterbury housing scheme, then known as Mountfield Park, was held back over concerns regarding disposal of waste water, particularly with respect to the added impact on our internationally important wetland at Stodmarsh. But the development now has an amber if not green light. Recently, during the short May heat wave, it became abundantly clear that South East Water cannot reliably supply sufficient drinking water for the existing needs of the Ashford and Canterbury districts, let alone the many thousands more households planned – and a further hike in our district’s population density.

The heart of our water system is the Great Stour – itself a locally and globally important chalk stream. A stream system that is key to our fresh water supply – and at the same time, in some regrettable respects, an open sewer. Below, David Kemsley offers a heartfelt plea – who will take care of our vital river, who will take that responsibility and manage our waterways properly? Will anyone stand up? Ed.

DAVID KEMSLEY'S PLEA

I should have known that what I thought would be a brief telephone call to the Editor would develop into a longer conversation about local environmental matters of shared concern. After some persuasion, but with my full agreement, I have written this personal account – which is not necessarily indicative of the view of any organisation of which I am a committee member.

I need to preface what follows with some important context. First and foremost, I have no scientific qualifications. Secondly, I get intensely irritated, to the point of shouting at the television (much to the displeasure of family members) about three specifics:

1. Representatives of public services whose first priority is to stress that they are working with partners. *Yes, yes, that's all very noble – but what are you actually doing through your own initiative?!*
2. Innumerate journalists that lack curiosity. *Why don't you ask about x?*
3. Weasel worded subjective statements from slick PR people and developers that are completely devoid of hard evidence or numbers. *The applicant for the proposed data processing centre at Shelford Farm has stated that water consumption will be minimal – what does that mean? A gallon a year or perhaps 500–2000 litres per day – who knows?* [According to Google AI, a small AI data processing plant (around 1 MW) requires about 70,000–100,000 litres per day; a medium-sized facility uses 1–4 million litres per day – mainly for cooling.]

I am obviously concerned about macro-environmental matters such as climate change – but I want to focus here on local matters and in particular water, and specifically the River Stour. I will leave for another day my worries about:

- The ever-growing mountain of waste at the Material Recovery Facility at Shelford Farm which looms ominously over our lovely World Heritage Site city
- Air Quality on the ring road poisoned not least by the 150 lorries a day that access the Shelford site
- Fresh water supply and the ambitious target of household consumption being reduced to 110 litres per person per day. Sounds very generous until you check the stats on your bill.

So, with respect to our beloved River Stour:



Almost anywhere you care to look, bucolic images of our “beloved River” abound – but the reality is of concern and lack of accountability. [Community Ad Magazine cover image by Raphaella3000@]

My paternal family hails from the Godmersham and Chilham area, and the river has been an important part of our lives for generations. It is distressing to know that the river in which my father and I swam in years ago, in our childhood, is now totally unsafe for bathing, with high levels of *E. coli*.

Figures presented by Iain Goodall at the recent Friends of Westgate Parks AGM revealed the extent of the prevailing pollution in the river. So my question is – who has the lead responsibility for sorting it out?

Maddeningly, the more questions I ask the more mysterious it becomes. For sure, lots of organisations, agencies and government departments say they care and are involved in some way or other – but who is leading the process and who will be held accountable if the river is not restored to good health? Interested parties, in no particular order, include an ever-changing Secretary of State for the Environment (currently Emma Reynolds, appointed last September) and her department (Defra), the Environment Agency, Natural England, Southern Water, South East Water, KCC and CCC. Without the help of wonderful volunteers who help with the upkeep of the river bank and rubbish removal, the river would be in an even sorrier condition than now.

Ashford and Canterbury Councils have joined forces to set up an agency called Stour Environment Credits Ltd. The agency will sell credits to developers. The funds from these credits will then be used to commission schemes, such as wetlands development and septic tank replacements, which will, it is claimed, offset the additional nutrients and pollutants being added to the river from the aforesaid developments. It is currently impossible to find out any detail about how this will work in practice, although it is clear that it is heavily reliant on input from Natural England.

The SEC website does not offer any explanation (<https://www.stourenvironmentalcredits.co.uk/>). Direct questions I put to a member of SEC staff met with a response suggesting that I had best ask Natural England (NE). NE has recently conceded that, despite a previous assurance to the Government, it does not have the funds to monitor these schemes.

Now consider this: buried in the fine detail of a recent planning application for a 73 place residential home at Thanington was a request, since granted, to be released from an obligation to provide a Waste Water Treatment Plant on site for the reason that credits had been purchased from SEC, seemingly for a mitigation scheme near Wye. Local people in Wye seem to have no knowledge of the proposal.

Big questions remain about transparency of SEC transactions, management of the mitigation schemes, the effectiveness of these schemes, and contingency plans if schemes are not successful. The even bigger underlying question, based on the definition of mitigation (Collins online dictionary) as “making less severe”, is when can we expect a reduction of nutrients, pollutants and *E. coli* in the river to a level deemed safe enough for people to swim, and flora and fauna to revive?

David Kemsley, 31 May 2026

Stour Valley Restore

While it does not offer the governmental or administrative assurances that David seeks, the

recently funded Stour Valley Restore project not only highlights many of the issues, it also promises a number of improvement and mitigation projects. More on this is included in the Digital Edition. Ed.

AND TALKING OF SOMETHING TO DRINK ...



According to the remarkable 'Dover Kent Archives (Canterbury)' website, the Two Doves public house (1965 picture by Edward Wilmot©: <http://www.dover-kent.com/Two-Doves-Canterbury.html>) in Nunnery Fields finally closed its doors in February 2019. The website devotes some 3000 words to subsequent efforts to revive it – but all to no avail.

Seven years on, it recently re-opened as a 'convenience' store – one wonders if it will succeed, and if not, what fate awaits after that? Meanwhile, am I alone in also wondering if its new 'exterior decor' is appropriate for a designated urban Conservation Area? Nunnery Fields was registered as one of Canterbury's official conservation areas on 12 November 1998. Sad to say, CCC axed its team of conservation officers in 2011, as part of a supposed cost-cutting exercise. Cost of everything, value of nothing springs to mind. Ed.



The new 'Two Doves' – conservation and/or convenience?

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. As ever, I am very grateful to Denis for his continuing input on the ever-more baffling saga of NHS management. Despite all the mayhem at political and senior management level, we have to be grateful that, when we actually need medical help, most NHS staff working at the 'coal face' still offer a wonderful service – at least, in my experience. Ed.

NHS Management

Mr Streeting's resignation letter clearly marks the political nature of his resignation, so I apologise for

mentioning it, but his letter is also HealthCare news, recounting as it does his successes, not any failure, as Health Secretary; he mentions *inter alia* his team's achievement in "balancing the books for the first time in nine years", a feat which will be very welcome, and perhaps also news to many NHS Finance Directors and to his successor, the ex-Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

The NHS 10-year Plan is strongly identified with the outgoing Health Secretary, but the Kent & Medway ICB's recent meeting (19 May) was too soon for any speculation about his successor's possible impact on the Plan; the Board remains deeply preoccupied with its change of role (to a predominantly commissioning body), with its colossal cost- and staff-reduction challenge, and with its almost total change of leadership, which by the coming autumn will have included the posts of CEO, Finance Director, Chief Strategy Officer, Chief of Staff, Director of Corporate Governance, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer, People Officer – and in mid-March, its Chair. Meanwhile, the ICS Partnership Joint Committee, whose original main function was to integrate KCC's and Medway's Social Care with the Health Service, met on 31 March this year, and is next scheduled to meet in March 2027.

Three members of the public asked questions at the May ICB Board, about the planned national "patient's record" (as I write, due to be debated in the Commons on 1 June). Concerns expressed include data security, commercial links, its American origin and ownership (Palantir), and political associations of the contractors. The Chair and CEO defended the scheme, and promised a full report at the July Board meeting.

Incidentally, the closure this coming December of the national 'watchdog' service Healthwatch has been announced. Denis Linfoot, 1 June 2026

Canterbury Safe Haven

OHSCA has been contacted regarding an alternative mental health crisis service, *Canterbury Safe Haven*. Open from 18.00–23.00 every day of the year, and located at 22–23 North Lane, Canterbury CT2 7EE, the Haven is non-clinical and non-judgemental, with an emphasis on providing support for those experiencing distress, as well as supporting clients to access potential services and opportunities in the wider community.

The Haven is drop-in, but it can also offer referrals to professionals. Anyone over the age of 18 is welcome, and it is not necessary to be registered with a mental health service. A virtual service is also available for those who cannot attend face-to-face. Telephone 07876 476703 or 07483 163953. More information can be found at: <https://www.mhm.org.uk/kent-safe-havens>.

Canterbury Safe Haven is part of a registered mental health charity run by Mental Health Matters (MHM), supported, funded, and endorsed in partnership with NHS Kent and Medway. Ed.

SOCIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES GROUP (SEA)

SEA organises social activities and events to bring the community together. Reminders are sent out by mailchimp to those members who have provided their

email address to Peter Whisson (email Peter at 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 for 2026

Monthly coffee mornings: Coffee mornings will continue on every fourth Wednesday of the month, apart from December. Dates: 24 June, 22 July, 26 August, 23 September, 28 October, and 25 November.

GIG (Gardeners' Interest Group): The annual Plant Share took place at Gill Prett's house on Saturday 23 May. On Sunday 24 May we visited Helly Langley's garden. On Sunday 14 June, Ann Riding opened her garden to members and guests. A planned visit to Godinton House (near Ashford) was cancelled due to poor weather; it may be re-scheduled.



This year's Plant Share was again not strongly supported – perhaps 30 people over the two hours. Those who did join greatly enjoyed themselves – not least due to Gill Prett's warm welcome and kind hospitality. Many plants to share, coffee, sunny skies, good company – what's not to like?

Forthcoming GIG events include:

- Thursday 25 June. Visit to Kenfield Hall. A maximum of 15 people (please be sure to book).
- Wednesday 8 July at 10am. Pilgrims Road Allotment visit. Retimed – please see foot of p. 9.
- Thursday 9 July at 2pm. Visit to Ouden Gardens near Ospringe. Tea & cake £6 (tbc).

Talks: The Story of the Kent and Canterbury Club at The Elms. The launch of the new book will take place on Tuesday 30 June at the Kent & Canterbury Club, with members of both OHSCA and the Kent & Canterbury Club present. The event is fully booked – but there is a waiting list. In the meantime the book will be available to buy from history@org.uk at the price of £15.

Visit to the Eastbridge Hospital & Franciscan Gardens, with a talk by the Reverend Dr Perry Butler. Saturday 18 July at 11 am. £10 per person donation to the Eastbridge Hospital Restoration Fund. Tours are limited to 15 people, and more than 15 have already applied. So we will be divided into two groups, both starting at 11am. The visit is proving very popular! However, please note that the tour is unsuitable for anyone with mobility issues (difficult access etc.).

The Dead-End Gang. Hugh Jocelyn will talk about his novel, set in WW2, on 29 September at the Kent & Canterbury Club. This is Hugh's first published novel, a fictional account based on the story of his Uncle Frank,

then Lieutenant Elliott, who arrived in Cairo to join the Special Investigation Branch of the Military Police to bring down a gang of deserters called the Dead-End Kids.

Informal Lunches: We met on Friday 24 April for lunch at the Old Gate Inn. Another lunch will take place on Friday 9 October.



Friday 10 April – gathering for the first of the revived weekly walks

Walks: Friday mornings: We meet on Fridays at 10am at the old main entrance to the Kent & Canterbury Hospital (Ethelbert Rd). We communicate in advance via WhatsApp. Contact Lucy Fletcher-Jones (see p. 8) if you wish to be added to the WhatsApp group.

A walk through *Old Park*, to end at the George & Dragon, Fordwich, where walkers can, if they like, take refreshment, including lunch. Return to Canterbury by public transport is practical. Rob Veltman and Dick Vane-Wright hope to arrange this late July/early August.

Summer Lunch & Garden Party: A bring and share lunch, accompanied by a saxophonist, will take place on Saturday 11 July, 12.30–3pm, in the Ethelbert Road garden of Alison Culverwell and Francis Green ('rain day': 12 July).

Annual General Meeting: will take place on Friday 23 October at the Kendall Hall. Light refreshments for the evening will be provided by SEA sub-committee. Stewart Ross, Chair of Canterbury Commemoration Society, will give a talk (see p. 2).

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

SEA sub-committee: *Alison Culverwell, Lorna Durrani, Helly Langley, Margot Leslie, Judy Seymour-Ure, Hazel & Dick Vane-Wright*

OFF THE SHELF

I have not received a book review for this edition. Instead, O. Hill, our reviewer in chief, has submitted a piece on a curious case of synchronicity ... However, when it comes to disposing of books no longer required, there are several other, even OHSCA-linked local options ... something for the next Newsletter perhaps ...
Ed.

Shortly before Easter I received a postcard from my sister. Nothing unexpected in that. It revealed that she and her husband had spent three days in Nice, with a great view over the bay etc., and 'would be around in Ramsgate for Easter, so may see you then.'

One or two details in the card struck me as strange, however – the mention of the sale of a house (surely it had been sold years ago?), and a note, sectioned off from the main message, that read ‘I found this inside a book on the giveaway shelf at Canterbury West Station.’ Well, I thought, studying the picture of a luminescent stained glass window, why not? If the card is good and an appropriate occasion for it arises ...

In an email I acknowledged the arrival of the card and the curious way it had been originally acquired here in Canterbury, and suggested a date for an Easter get-together. The reply I received was puzzled. They had indeed, she said, just returned from a short holiday, but in Spain, not France, and the card she had written had been posted a matter of hours before she got my email. Record speed for a postal delivery! What's more, since I mentioned it, she could not remember the last time she had passed through Canterbury West, and had absolutely no acquaintance with its shelf of books.

Actually the solution to the riddle was quite simple. The card from Nice was truly from Nice – it had originally arrived years ago and I had subsequently used it as a bookmark. The bookmark, along with the book, had gone down to the West Station shelf (I must have taken it there myself). The person who then picked the book up had discovered the card inside, had thoughtfully jotted an explanatory note (in hand-writing not dissimilar to my sister's) and stuck it back in the post. The time of year was a perfect coincidence!

If this little story has any purpose, it is this. It has made me reflect how convenient the Canterbury West book exchange shelf has become as an outlet for a periodic cull of books. Books are inherently bulky objects, and if one wants to dispose of, say, a dozen at a time one may not want to carry them very far from a vehicle. Canterbury West has the free parking facility for the short time required for popping in and setting them out. There is even time to browse the other stock – which I have observed, judging from my previous donations there, does shift quite quickly.

So I conclude with that tip. A few books surplus to requirement? A means of transport to the station? Consider the charity bookshelf at Canterbury West. You might even receive a card ...

O Hill

LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

Our latest book, *The Story of the Kent & Canterbury Club at The Elms*, was published recently. Commissioned by David Steed, President of the Kent & Canterbury Club, in memory of his elder brother,

Michael Steed (an active member of OHSCA and LHG), it provides a history of the origins of the Club from 1861, and its previous and current premises, The Elms since 1923. The Elms, also known as The White Elms, was built in the 1820s and prior to 1923 was lived in by a number of wealthy and illustrious Kent families, the last of whom was Agnes Charlotte Hughes D'Aeth, great-niece of Jane Austen.

The book launch, a joint event with Club members, will take place on Tuesday 30 June at the Kent & Canterbury Club (17 Old Dover Rd). All OHSCA members booked in for the cancelled 20 March event have been automatically transferred to 30 June. The event is fully booked. In the meantime, the book will be available for purchase for £15, via history@ohsca.org.

The group's AGM will take place on Tuesday 8 September at The Old Gate Inn. All are welcome.

LHG will have a stall in the Heritage Expo 26 on Saturday 28 November 2026 from 10:00–16:00, at the Westgate Hall. Hosted by the Canterbury Commemoration Society, Heritage Expo 26 will feature numerous groups, both commercial and charitable, that have an interest in or connection to the magnificent heritage of Canterbury. Canterbury, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, attracts several million tourists each year, and it is applying to become a UNESCO City of Literature.

Lorna Durrani, Chair, LHG (history@ohsca.org)

TIM JONES' FILM SCREENINGS RETURN

On Saturday 23 May at the Powell Lecture Theatre, Tim Jones, Senior Lecturer at CCCU, presented a screening of amateur films of Canterbury and its surrounding area from the 1920s to present day. Having attended previous screenings some years back it was great to see all the new footage Tim has discovered.

The presentation started with the Canterbury Cine Society (1934-1939) whose members were keen to film their own dramas as well as recording local events. They built their own sets from anything to hand and created reflector lights by lining lampshades with foil from cigarette packs!

We then saw films shot by early photographers Sydney Bligh, Leslie Goulden and then John Vissenga who recorded “Industries of Canterbury” in the late ‘20s. Later footage by Douglas Gaywood, John Clague and, more recently, Dick Laslett (Canterbury Hockey Club) and Tony Wright (archaeological digs) gave nostalgic views of post war Canterbury many will recall.

Tim also showed fascinating shots of identical City locations taken in 1937 and 2013 showing where some places have changed beyond recognition and others which, remarkably, have hardly changed at all. He also added his own more recent films of Canterbury during lockdown, building sites in 2021 and The Odeon after the fire.

This newsletter is too late for the next presentation, on works by Sydney Bligh (1 June), but do watch out for Tim's future screenings. His Canterbury Amateur Film Archive can be viewed at:

<https://blogs.canterbury.ac.uk/cafa>

... where there are many different aspects of local life on film from aeroplanes to zoos. It's well worth a look.

Marion Bell

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: greenteam@ohsca.org
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: <i>Keith Rishworth</i> .
Local History Group	Chair LHG: <i>Lorna Durrani</i> , history@ohsca.org Secretary LHG: <i>Michael Brain</i> , 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	<i>Lorna Durrani</i> : social@ohsca.org (current SEA group members listed on p. 6)
OHC	<i>Denis Linfoot, Alison Culverwell, David Kemsley, Dick Vane-Wright</i>
Newsletter editor	<i>Dick Vane-Wright</i> : 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 (for current ACRA response to the Local Plan, go to: https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/LocalPlanACRA%20response_18%20May%2026.pdf)
- 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>
- For issues with roads, travel, pavements, paths, etc., go to: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel>



Some OHSCA dates June – October 2026			
24 June	Coffee morning (p. 6)	22 July	Coffee morning (p. 6)
25 June	<u>Kenfield</u> House (p. 6)	26 August	Coffee morning (p. 6)
30 June	Book launch & talk (pp. 6, 7)	8 September	<u>LHG</u> AGM (p. 7)
3 July	Allotment visit (p. 6)	23 September	Coffee morning (p. 6)
9 July	<u>Ouden</u> Gardens (p. 6)	29 September	Hugh Jocelyn talk (p. 6)
11 July	Summer garden party (p. 6)	9 October	Informal lunch (p. 6)
18 July	<u>Eastbridge</u> talk & tour (p. 6)	23 October	<u>OHSCA</u> AGM (p. 6)
		28 October	Coffee morning (p. 6)

DIGITAL EXTRA: SPRING 2026

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In compiling this summer '26 edition, the Editor wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to all contributors, with special thanks to Marion Bell, Mark Collins (Broads Society), Lorna Durrani, Deirdre Hawkes, David Kemsley, Denis Linfoot, Richard Norman (SMRARA), Rob Veltman and Peter Whisson. I am always happy to consider unsolicited letters, articles or requests from OHSCA Members – simply contact me via editor@ohsca.org. *Dick Vane-Wright*

A LITTLE MORE ABOUT SOPHIE SCOTT

The sad passing of long-time OHDS and OHSCA committee member Sophie Scott, briefly noted on page 2, occurred just as the hard copy edition of this newsletter was being sent to the printers. One or more personal tributes to Sophie will be included the Autumn newsletter – due to reach all OHSCA Members on or before Friday 2 October. However, as Editor, I thought it appropriate to add a little something extra here. Sophie was literally interested in everything that came to the attention of OHDS and, subsequently OHSCA. She was our redoubtable Membership Secretary for many years, also Hon. Treasurer for OHDS, fierce advocate for being involved in local planning matters, promoter of social events, a leader and very influential light in the long-standing Local History Group, hands-on with the Newsletter Delivery Team, pioneer and flag-waver for the environmental and public gardening work of the Green Team – and, with respect to her beloved trees, almost superhuman protector, improver and tree planter – to the extent that this was recognised for this by CCC and KCC. In so many ways a unique and selfless contributor to everything our Associations have done for the past three decades.

You can use the following links to access three previous newsletter articles about Sophie:

<https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/OHSCA%20Newsletter%20no.%2012%20%20Autumn%202019%20print%20version.pdf> [pp. 1,4]

<https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/OHSCA-Newsletter-20-2021-Autumn.pdf> [p. 12]

<https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/OHSCA-Newsletter-34-2025-Spring.pdf> [pp. 4–5]

Deirdre Hawkes, who worked with and supported Sophie in many roles, has informed us that the funeral will take place at **St Martin's Church on Friday 3 July, 12.00**. If you would wish to join the wake, please contact Deirdre directly for details, as numbers could be an issue (greenteam@ohsca.org).*



“Sophie’s Rose” at Milton Road, 13 June 2026 (DH)

*Please note: as a result, the planned allotment visit (p. 6) has been retimed for Wednesday 8 July. 10 am sharp. Entry by the upper gate (the one adjacent to railway line); this gate will be locked at 10.10, when the tour will start.

WATER – ‘US’ AS WELL AS ‘THEM’

While there are many good reasons to blame others (e.g. water companies), and rail at governmental organisations for lack of leadership (see p. 4), all with respect to the parlous state of our water supplies and water pollution, as individual citizens we have a part to play as well. Water meters help us monitor the amount of water we use, and then take steps to reduce our demands if we can do so. In a world which has allowed almost free-rein to industry to develop and sell many thousands of chemical substances previously unknown on Earth, now taking a terrible toll on Nature as they spread and persist literally everywhere, it is very difficult for us as consumers – given our part in the unquestioned pursuit of annual growth in GDP as supposedly the only solution to all political problems. However, if informed, we can still make some choices to reduce our otherwise unwitting collusion in this unsustainable process. But was it necessary for one of my daughters to have to point out that the type of washing up liquid I was using contained chemicals “Harmful to aquatic life with long lasting effects” (‘on the tin’, bold as brass). Why had I not bothered to read this? Red-faced, I changed to something I hope is less threatening to wildlife.

A colleague deeply involved with the Norfolk *Broads Society* has kindly shared the article below, which seems to sum up not only a perfect example of the problem, but also alerts us to possible choices and mitigations we can make even when authorities vacillate. This is just one example – it is not an attack on pet owners (which includes myself!). However, as with what goes in my washing up bowl, knowledge is power – in the context of water pollution, the power to act as a responsible individual citizen. Ed.

TOXIC FLEA TREATMENTS ARE KILLING OUR BROADS RIVERS – WE MUST ACT NOW

As a regular reader of *Harnser* [<https://www.broads-society.org/harnser-magazine>] and our website blogs, you will already appreciate that the Broads Society has expressed grave concern about over-the-counter pet flea treatments containing Fipronil and Imidacloprid being sold in corner shops and supermarkets. We have known since 2017 that these neurotoxins, once they enter our wastewater systems and waterways, kill insects and other invertebrates indiscriminately across large areas and volumes of water. Moreover, we have known since 2020 that sewage works cannot remove these persistent chemicals and that they are present in discharge water at levels up to five times the established safety thresholds.

In July 2025, we appealed to Baroness Hayman, Under-Secretary of State at Defra, responsible for biosecurity and animal welfare and the lead for the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, to ban these products except by veterinary prescription and to require strict guidance and warning labels on commercially available products. In the same month, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, Defra and Baroness Hayman published a three-part government plan to address communication, evidence gathering and regulatory actions to mitigate environmental risks. However, a May 2026 independent report by Matt Shardlow has now laid out, in precise and indisputable terms, that this glacial approach to a serious pollution crisis that has been well known for a full decade is irresponsible and unsupportable. In short, these flea treatments need to be banned without further delay.

The Broads Society is submitting a complaint to the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, believing that a) it is in breach of its responsibilities because it has not taken steps to reduce pollution from flea treatments in the Broads National Park, despite knowing about the problem since 2017; b) it has not undertaken a Habitats Regulations Appropriate Assessment, despite being the Competent Authority, for authorising the use of Fipronil and Imidacloprid, including in the Broads Special Area of Conservation, Specially Protected Area and Ramsar Site; and c) it has not undertaken a review of the assessment reports or marketing authorisations for Fipronil or Imidacloprid, as required by the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013, when new information has become available.

The Broads Society also invites the Broads Authority and the Environment Agency, who are the prime guardians of the Broads environment, to explain what firm and practical actions they will immediately take to reduce and remove these polluting chemicals from the rivers of the Broads National Park, beyond merely sharing already well-publicised information.

Sources

1. Broads Authority
2. Collins, M. & Shardlow, M. (2025) More must be done to control pet flea treatments. *Harnser* Autumn 2025: 19–20.
3. Collins, M. (2025) Should pet flea treatments be regulated? Broads Society blog 21 July. <https://www.broads-society.org/post/should-pet-flea-treatments-be-regulated>
4. Shardlow, M. (2026) Flea treatment pollution crisis: an independent review. <https://wcl.org.uk/docs/2026/Flea%20Treatment%20Crisis%20-%20Independent%20Review%20final.pdf>
5. VMD, Defra & Baroness Hayman (2025) Government publishes plan to address presence of chemicals from pet flea and tick treatments in UK waterways. Government press release.

Mark Collins, Chair of the Broads Society (reproduced here with permission)

ROAD SAFETY

I recently received the following in an email from Rob Veltman. He raises some interesting issues that he or others might care to take up through the Committee. Ed.

“On page 8 of the printed newsletter, under ‘useful contacts’: please include regularly the contact details for KCC Highways. Our sector has some major problems over and above the quality of the road surfaces (potholes, fissures) etc. The bend at the junction of Puckle Lane and Nunnery Fields/ South Canterbury Road poses dangers to all travellers, whether pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users or drivers: The slow-down signage and arrangements are currently below par, insufficient and routinely ignored by drivers.

Also, why is the footpath – a convenient and safe shortcut – from St. Lawrence Forstal next to No.7 *The Oast* to the streets near Sainsbury’s at St. Lawrence Cricket Ground – permanently closed off? Public use of this short path, which opens into Woolmer Close, would circumvent the risks of taking to a particularly hazardous part of Old Dover Road, with no pedestrian pavement on one side, an inconvenient feature also of Nackington Road, where it approaches Old Dover Road. And how about privately owned hedges e.g. at the top of Nunnery Fields, the growth of which encroaches upon already narrow pedestrian space?”

Rob Veltman

THE DETOUR

About the only advantage, if walking from the Cricket Ground from K&C grounds via St. Lawrence Forstal, in being forced to detour along the dangerous section of the Old Dover Road that Rob mentions, is to catch a glimpse of the ancient doorway that was part of the long-lost St. Lawrence Hospital – founded by Abbot Hugh in 1137.

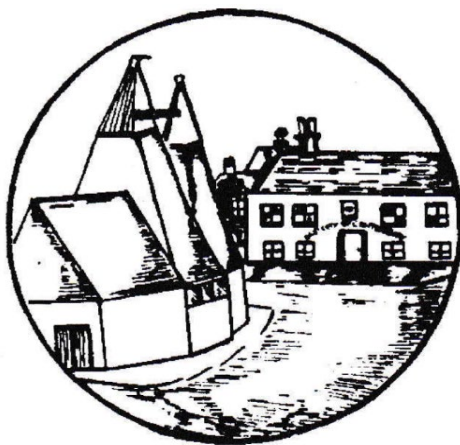


This image of the old gate, by Paul Crampton©, can be found at: <http://www.machadoink.com/St%20Lawrences%20Hospital.htm>

If you want to know more about this historic site, you can get more information using the link above – and by taking *Old Dover Road—Past and Present* (LHG, 2012) off your shelf, and going to pp. 34/35. Ed.

FIFTEEN YEARS ON – A TALE OF TWO NEWSLETTERS

The year 2011 marks the half-way point of Sophie Scott's immersive involvement with the Oaten Hill & District Society and, subsequently, OHSCA. The year was also the point by which South Canterbury Residents Association was getting into its stride – with no expectation at that time that SCRA would amalgamate with OHDS a mere five years later. The following 12-page OHDS Newsletter 110, for December 2011, makes an interesting contrast with the 2-page SCRA Newsletter no. 2, for April 2011. Not only can you detect some hybrid graphical origins of the OHSCA newsletter style and layout, more significantly, you can also see that many of the issues remain the same today as then. Or not – e.g. the sad fate of the hospital shuttle bus! Ed.



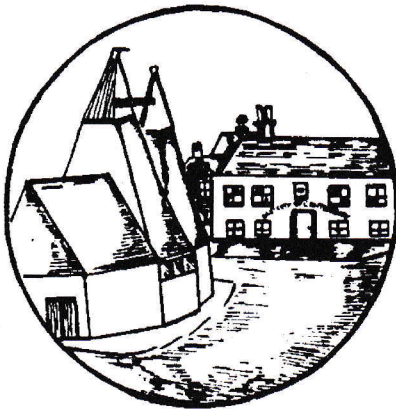
SOUTH CANTERBURY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



An early OHSCA committee meeting, held at the home of the late Graham Wood on 10 July 2018. From the left, around the table: Denis Linfoot, Marion Bell, Jeff Derham, Graham, Pat Edwards, David Kemsley, Helly Langley, Sophie Scott, Tim Carlyle, Chris Tucker. [Original digital photograph by Dick Vane-Wright.]

As was said at the time, “OHSCA was born nearly two years ago out of necessity. Its two parent organisations, OHDS and SCRA, despite 50 years of activity between them, were both having difficulty in forming large enough committees to deal with all the issues and opportunities that now confront a residents’ group in a fast-changing environment like Canterbury.” Is history repeating itself? Will a new generation of committed committee members please step forward? Your Association Needs You!

Oaten Hill & District Society



THE OBJECTS OF THE OHDS are to preserve the distinctive village character of this area of Canterbury by:

- ♦ enabling the members of the community to control their physical environment
- ♦ promoting the balance between residential and business interests in the area
- ♦ informing local residents of the opportunities available to enhance the area
- ♦ providing a forum for residents and keeping them in touch with each other through newsletters and social activities.

Newsletter 110, December 2011. Editor: Jerry Kemp

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The Spring Party

is now fixed for

2 March 2012 at 7 p.m.

at the Kent & Canterbury Club.

Please see page 11 for tickets (£15),
which are available from Sophie Scott.

Editorial

At this time of year we, as a society, issue our larger, bumper winter newsletter and this is it! We issue 4 newsletters a year but it is only this one which is issued to every household in the Oaten Hill area. So welcome to all non-members who are reading this.

The aims of the society are set out elsewhere in this newsletter and, of course, what we do is for the benefit of the community as a whole and not just for members. That said the more members we have the louder our voice is. Many of the departments within the Canterbury City Council (particularly planning and trees) know us well and listen to our thoughts, suggestions and recommendations on a variety of issues. We like to think that we have some influence on what happens in our district and the louder our voice the greater that influence will be. Membership is not expensive at £5 per household and I would ask all non-members reading this newsletter to consider joining; you would be very welcome. The membership secretary is Sophie Scott whose details are on the back page; she would love to hear from you.

There have been some committee changes over the last few weeks. We now have a representative of the South Canterbury area in Grenville Hancox. We also have a new tree representative in David Kemsley and a licensing representative in Rob Pratt McMachan. We also welcome the return of Jane Farrell to the committee after an absence of about 2 years. We say goodbye to Sheila Sharp and Rosemary Simpson who leave the committee and many thanks for all your hard work over the years.

However I cannot conclude this editorial without mentioning the Military Road traffic lights. Regular readers will know that for most of this year I have been battling on about these. At the time of the last newsletter they had been installed but not activated and I remained mystified as to what was going on. It was as if the Council (or Kent Highways) was just waiting for me to write that! Between drafting the last editorial and its circulation to members the lights were indeed activated. However, in the last 3 months I have never seen them red: I remain entirely in the dark as to why they are there. Does anyone out there know what it was all about?

Jerry Kemp

Local History Group

The Society's Local History Group started life in 1986 as an 'Oral History Group' but has widened its research into the history of buildings and places. Details of its work and publications can be found on the Society's web page, and on the back page of this newsletter. The meetings are held bi-monthly, active members number around 15.

The current officers are: Chairman: Mike Brain; Secretary and representative on the Society's committee: Michael Steed; Treasurer: Graham Wood, and Archivist: Marion Heath. We are seeking a new Minutes Secretary as Brenda Perriss, a founder member, has indicated that regretfully, she has to resign from this position.

The group continues to develop and we would welcome new members and officers. We are nearing publication of our current illustrated booklet *Old Dover Road Past and Present*. We will therefore be considering topics for our next project and activities. If you would like to suggest an area of study, participate in our work, or wish to learn something of the rich history of our area, do get in touch with Michael and join us at the Kent and Canterbury Club at 10.30 a.m. on the following dates: 10 January (AGM), 13 March, 8 May, 10 July, 11 September and 13 November. If you wish to contact the History Group they will be pleased to hear from you. Please then telephone Mike Brain whose number is 767343.

Mike Brain Chairman

The Chairman's Report

New proposals for our area

Recently, two proposals which will have a very significant impact in our area have been made.

The first comes from the Council and is part of a review being made of city centre surface car parks, mostly aimed at rebuilding housing on part of them. The one that concerns us most nearly is the Longport car park where the proposal is that the side of Ivy Lane leading to Lower Chantry Lane should be rebuilt with ten new houses. This development would involve the loss of 26 parking spaces on the Longport car park. In addition up to ten further parking spaces would be lost at any one time because residents of the new housing would be allowed parking permits which would let them park there. So, up to 36 of the 105 parking spaces there would be lost to current users: over one third of the total. The OHDS main concern is that the knock-on effect of this will be that more of those wishing to park in our area will take on-street parking places thus squeezing the on-street parking available to residents and their guests even more.

A second and slightly earlier proposal which bears on this issue was reported and discussed at our recent AGM. It is a plan, which was only presented to the Council for planning permission in early December, to demolish the Blockbuster building in the Old Dover Road and construct a Premier Inn there. The hotel would have 120 rooms on the second to fourth floors of the building with a dining area etc on the first floor. The ground floor is expected to have a retail use. (We have been assured that there will not even be a planning application for entertainment there which would enable it to become a nightclub—a thought which had alarmed some of our Committee!)

The reason this relates to the Longport car park development is that Premier Inn is proposing to provide only 25 parking places in their development for parking, most of which will probably be used by staff. Where will the cars of their clients be from the point they arrive in Canterbury, mainly in afternoon and early evening, and then remain until the next morning? One of the answers they have recently given has been 'on the Longport car park'. It is not difficult to imagine the possible further knock-on effects of this for residents' parking in our area.

The answer to the resident on-street parking problem which the OHDS Committee has been considering is that on-street parking in the St George's and St Augustine's parking zones should become residents and residents' guests only parking. If these developments go ahead without suitable amendment we *will* need to press vigorously that demand on the Council.

A successful AGM

Our AGM held in October this year was, I feel, a great success. For the first time we held this meeting at Augustine House and we were provided with a very comfortable meeting room. Nearly 70 people (roughly 20% of our membership) attended and heard an excellent talk about Canterbury's 'Red Dean', Hewlett Johnson, by Professor John Butler who had just published a book on the subject. John was both interestingly informative and often highly amusing, especially where he drew on the often 'daggers drawn' correspondence between the Dean and Archbishop Fisher (with the deep hostility usually—but not always!—expressed in the most polite formulations). Clearly he had used the papers and correspondence in the Dean's archive and that at Lambeth Palace (the first person to be permitted to do so for publication) to great effect. I hope some of you who could not be there will read and enjoy the book—an account in part of an important period in Canterbury's recent history. John Butler's book has recently been chosen by the present Archbishop as the *New Statesman's* book of the year.

The business part of the AGM looked at a number of oncoming issues affecting the

OHDS area, including the likely application for the building of a Premier Inn mentioned above, and the 'Development Brief for the Rhodaus Town area which I will deal with below.

And a successful year?

In general, I feel, 2011 was a very successful year for our society.

Most visibly, and at last, real improvement in the area near the Odeon cinema was achieved. But even here, there was some disappointment in the KCC failure to completely resurface, and only to 'patch repair' the area leading from it to Dover St. And we still wait for the new lights along the path next to the Odeon which was to be part of the cinema's contribution.

The good relations with Christ Church in relation to their development at St George's Place continued, with for example the developer agreeing to pay compensation to those most affected by the dust and dirt created especially in the early stage of the development. And the City Council conceded the justice of our case that the loss of parking places in Dover St, during the period of building, should be compensated by resident parking permit holders in the St George's zone being able to park free on Holman's Meadow.

Recently, however, an area of concern about this development has arisen. This is not because of any fault on the part of the developer, but because rumour has it the Kent County Council is requiring that the extent and quality of work which was to be done on the pavement fronting the development should be reduced. The proposed work there was agreed by Christ Church in part on the urging of OHDS. We wanted good quality paving (preferably York stone), some planting of trees and shrubs, cycle parking and railings to discourage dangerous attempts to cross New Dover Road at places other than the established underpass and surface crossing. Apparently KCC is resisting much of this on the grounds that it will create inconvenience in maintenance and make such maintenance more expensive. We have referred the matter to our County Councillor, Michael Northey, who has confirmed some of the rumour, and who we hope will now press hard for the quality and character of work residents want. How strange to find a local authority demanding a lower quality than a developer is willing to provide!

One further great success, which will bear fruit in coming months, has been the appeal for money for tree planting in the lower New Dover Road and roads off it. We have raised well over £2,000. Many of our members and local businesses have contributed generously. Those businesses are listed and thanked elsewhere in this newsletter. Our individual members who have contributed will also receive public acknowledgement. And all donors will be invited to participate when trees are planted and when we celebrate the success of this scheme. But here I would like to thank particularly three local education establishments who have contributed: Christ Church University who are donating £800, Girne American University Canterbury which has given £200 and Stafford House which has contributed £100. Between them these three have contributed nearly half of the total raised.

I mentioned that at the AGM there was discussion of the 'Planning Brief' for Rhodaus Town which the Council had prepared. As a consequence of views expressed then and of later discussion our society pressed for a number of changes to the brief. We were particularly concerned that any development on the site should not generate significantly increased traffic movements onto the already and often congested ring road. We also felt that any student housing there should be part of a supervised campus development which should include both academic and social facilities. Building near the residential areas of Rhodaus Close and Lansdown Road should be compatible with those areas in both height and the amount of noise they might generate.

When the revised brief representing the Council's response to the consultation was published we were very pleased to see how far the document had moved in our direction. But one significant point remained. The Council had held to its view that the existing entrance/exit to and from the site onto Lansdown Road should remain the main emergency access. Our new Committee member Rob Pratt-MacMachan was able later to tell the Council Executive how inappropriate that was given that Lansdown Road is now considered too narrow to permit waste collection vehicles to use it. He was given a more sympathetic reception than might have been expected!

One final disappointment for us this year has been the failure of the scheme for murals in the two underpasses at St George's Roundabout (other than the 'millennium' one for which we have contributed so much time, money and effort). We thought two more murals paid for, in one case, by a donation from Girne University and in the other by sponsorship by local businesses and individuals, had been agreed. When over a year later nothing had happened we asked the Council why. The answer was simply that the council had changed its mind and wanted a common approach to entrances to the city based on its new arts policy. However we were told this was unlikely to happen for at least three years! We will be meeting the council officer responsible for the new policy in the near future.

Why not join us?

If you are concerned about any of the sorts of issues in our area that are dealt with here, why not become a member of OHDS?

This newsletter is one of 3 or 4 produced and distributed to members each year. The difference is that this issue is also delivered to non-members in the area. Why not join and receive all of them?

OHDS is without doubt one of the strongest, most respected and most effective local societies in the city. We already have a relatively high membership with around 247 households in our area paying their £5 annual subscriptions, and further individual members paying £3 p.a. This is significantly better value than many such organisations around the country!

In the coming year members will not only receive all our newsletters but be able to attend a number of our events—our spring party, our summer picnic, talks and events including a talk by Paul Bennett of Canterbury Archaeological Trust on recent excavations in the city including that at St George's Place.

See the note elsewhere in this newsletter on how to join us.

OHDS TREE WALKS

As the retiring tree person for the OHDS, it may be of interest to members to learn about some of the highlights of my nearly 8 years 'treeing'.

We are blessed, fortunately, with many survivals. We have enjoyed some successes which counteract a number of sad losses. We have striven since our beginning in 1974 to enhance our area and make it greener. We are optimistic so we have good works, tree-wise, in hand or planned.

In order to be able to illustrate some of this may I invite you to try a tree walk? I shall try to draw up three different ones so that I can draw your attention to notable trees and other aspects of special interest.

The best place to start our first walk is where it all began at The Shrubbery, on the corner of Dover Street and Oaten Hill. Planning permission had been sought to clear the whole site for redevelopment and local residents were justifiably up in arms. The then newly-formed OHDS was successful in its opposition and most of the trees there still survive. Walking along Dover Street we come upon our first loss, namely nine whitebeams and one Swedish whitebeam which have all been felled to make way for student housing on the site of Netto. Some replanting is said to have been planned ... It is then redeemed by 'our' St George's Garden after our 30-year struggle to improve this crucial site at the entrance to the City. We hope that Biggleston's Link to it will soon be

resurfaced properly. The edges of the new planters make ideal seats in this pleasant corner. Two new trees, Turkish hazels, have been added to the remaining lime tree in addition to well-designed planting of shrubs, roses and perennials underneath them. Round the corner into St. George's Place we are glad to see the eight plane trees, planted in March 1998, along the central reservation. In the thirteen years since then they have matured well. Further along on the left-hand side of the drive into Waitrose Car Park we note losses that have not been replaced. The two ash trees, but sadder, the mature copper beech have been felled so let us hurry across Lower Chantry Lane and continue along the New Dover Road where, left and right, a number of mature trees are surviving well. On the left-hand side we pass the widened driveway into Canterbury College. The hornbeams either side were replanted in 2005 but pleached. Now they are mostly taking their own lives in hand so already they begin to look like proper beech trees. Such independence is a delight. The residents in Ersham Road energetically insist on the tree life in their road, augmented by those in Magdalen Court. Walking outwards along New Dover Road we have many fine trees on both sides as far out as Rochester Avenue.

Our second walk will be around a different part of the OHDS area. From the New Dover Road we shall proceed along Abbots Barton Walk near which the upper railway embankment is still tree-lined. The lower part, however, has been denuded of trees but sycamores will grow up again. From the tree-friendly Walk we turn left into the Old Dover Road. The yew and holly trees are a welcome introduction to Ethelbert Road where there are still quite a few magnificent trees, but some have been felled with no signs of any replanting. The avenue of horse chestnuts into the Kent and Canterbury Hospital could all be threatened due to disease but one which had been removed as unfit was replaced in 2005. We hope that trees will be replanted in their stead. The trees on the Cricket Ground which enhanced the back gardens from St. Lawrence Forstal have all been executed on behalf of 'development' and profit. So halfway up Ethelbert Road we need to seek consolation in the 'secret' garden which opens off a little alleyway. It has four recently planted liquidambar or maple trees, one of which is to commemorate the long and faithful commitment to the OHDS by Joan Brown. At the other end of this delightful quiet garden we arrive in the green space of Raymond Avenue. There the residents planted the free native trees offered by the Kent Countryside Management in 2009. Thence we walk into Puckle Lane which still mostly has its rural character with some magnificent trees. About halfway up on the left hand side standing in the middle of the front garden is a fine 60-year old blue cedar which had been threatened by the neighbours. Fortunately the defence against the planning application was effective enough for the TPO to remain in place, so the blue cedar is still a joy to see. At the top end of Puckle Lane we turn briefly into South Canterbury Road having passed by The Pines where there are still pines, two beeches, an evergreen oak and a couple of yews that emphasise the junction. A short way along is a short unpaved road linking South Canterbury Road to Cromwell Road where local residents have planted orchard trees to prevent parking while still allowing cars to drive through. We hope this community orchard will thrive. There we turn left into the end of Cromwell Road, a typically suburban one, and round into the top end of Nunnery Fields where we can see The Pines from below.

At the bottom of Nunnery Fields we had best start our third walk with St Mary Bredin Churchyard. There are still 3 beeches and a yew along the Old Dover Road but along the Nunnery Fields side a couple of sycamores and possibly one willow have been lost to the sacred car for parking. We turn left into the Old Dover Road where the Health Centre has a fine copper beech and other mature trees which complement those in Holman's Mews. The Judas tree at Vernon Grange opposite was truly splendidly in bloom earlier this year in spite of a drastic pruning in the winter. The Police Station

still sports a cherry tree and a sycamore. The sad state of affairs opposite at the Fire Station is soon to be improved. The OHDS are negotiating with the Fire Brigade for at least one tree and planters, perhaps like those in St. George's Garden, both of which would greatly enhance this part of the ring road.

Maybe all of our efforts at greening our part of the City will improve Canterbury's chances in the Britain in Bloom competition next year. If we each planted a native tree in our gardens more wild life would be encouraged.

Carolyn Edrich

The great big tree plant

This year our scheme to plant new trees in New Dover Road, Upper Chantry Lane and St Augustine's Road has been so well supported that we have also been able to help Ersham Road with their Diamond Jubilee trees, replacing three old diseased and unsafe trees with three young trees. We have also worked with the Fire Brigade, and a lime tree should by now have been planted on Upper Bridge Street. The generosity of our members has been fantastic and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed. We are always grateful for support from local businesses and we would like to thank Blake's Hair and Beauty Salon, Lioness Writing Ltd, Waitrose and Betteshanger Brass Band.

Planting should take place some time in January and in our next newsletter, which goes to members only, we would like to list all the generous members who have made this such a success.

Sophie Scott

St George's Garden

The new St George's Garden opened at the beginning of June. Covering the triangle between what is now the Green Curry Thai restaurant (4/5 Upper Bridge Street) and the Odeon Cinema, this is the climax of some thirty-five years' hard work by many different members of the Oaten Hill Society.

The new ground surface at last replaces broken-tiled ballroom flooring alongside the cinema which was exposed nearly fifty years ago by the Blitz, when the western wing of the then Regal Cinema had to be demolished; the stark bare wall still stands exposed today. The rest of the site became derelict with the 1960s demolition of 1, 2 and 3 Upper Bridge St to make way for the inner ring road and new St George's Roundabout. When the Oaten Hill Society was founded in 1974, it quickly turned its attention to this eyesore.

Early correspondence in the Society's files shows that the problem then was a mixture of complicated ownership and planning blight. Subsequent communications from the legal eagles at the City Council have served only to make the triangle's ownership, divided between Kent Highways, CCC, and the two adjacent commercial enterprises (then Greenfield's, the shooting, fishing and country clothing shop, and the ABC cinema), even more obscure. As for the blight, before Canterbury lost its county borough status in April 1974, there had been some informal agreement for Greenfield's shop to be extended onto the site. Discussions about this redevelopment continued to at least December 1979.

OHDS mobilised support from its members; from Greenfield's and the ABC cinema; and from Brett's, Greyfriars Nursery, Parkside school and CCC's Parks Department. Pending the redevelopment, large concrete rings were placed on the site and planted with saplings and flowers. The Society received enthusiastic commendations for turning the wasteland into a garden from Canterbury in Bloom, signed by Bernard Porter (the mayor), and from the Canterbury Society, signed by Kenneth Pinnock.

These are reproduced on page 23 of the Society's 1974-99 Jubilee publication, along with photo published in the *Kentish Gazette* report of September 1980 "*Brightening up a dull corner*". Longer-standing Society members will recognize several faces in the photo; but who were the four children (from Parkside School?) shown at the front and where they are now?

One thing absent from these documents is a clear name! Originally it was variously the garden near St George's Roundabout, the ABC garden or the cinema garden; about ten years ago the Society adopted the name Newingate Garden (Newingate is the original historic name of St George's Gate), but that didn't stick and more recently it has been called the Odeon Cinema Garden. It is now, by decision of your committee accepted by CCC, St George's Garden, as a plaque on the cinema wall proclaims.

Meanwhile, the garden was looked after by a long string of OHDS volunteers, with some periods when neglect (aided and abetted by vandalism) took its toll if one of them couldn't cope so easily. The first was the late Ruth Taylor (whose own garden, visible from Abbotts Barton Walk, was a delight to see). The story of her family's business, and another photograph of the OHDS Garden, are recorded in our local history group's first publication *The Taylors of Canterbury* (1989).

However, whatever effort OHDS volunteers put into the garden tubs, the area around continued to look like what it was—a demolition site temporarily tidied up a bit pending a decision about its future. The saplings grew to trees, and their roots broke up some of the concrete rings. First one tree, then another, had to be removed by the Council due to disease or damage. The demolition site lies on the main walking route into the city centre from South Canterbury; but the passage linking it from Dover Street, a product of another demolition in 1947, was also a mess. The subway linking it to the city centre was dingy and threatening.

Periodically your committee made progress. The biggest achievement was millennium fund grant which we used to paint the murals in the subway; originally it had been intended to paint the cinema wall, but uncertainty about the cinema's future switched the funding to Elisa Hudson's lively murals in the subway. We also persuaded the Council to give the anonymous alleyway a name —Biggleston's Link, though it remained a mess.

As part of this millennium project, Carolyn Brenchley, a garden designer then on the OHDS committee, prepared plans for full landscaping of the site. We even raised some money from Wilkinson's, then just opening diagonally across the way; but the Council put our proposals into some bureaucratic process from which they never emerged. All that came of it was some money in the OHDS environmental improvement fund and painting the concrete rings blue (Carolyn's idea). A little bit of one of them, still blue, can be seen underneath the remaining original lime tree.

Most recently, Sophie Scott took on maintaining the garden, with new planting and a vigorous campaign to improve the whole site. At long last, the City Council woke up and we have a little green oasis for the Society to be proud of.

Michael Steed

To Park or not to Park, that is the question

The new Marlowe Theatre opened some weeks ago and one evening, in the pouring rain, I took myself off to see a show. I drove, which was probably a mistake, but then it was raining solidly and enquiries revealed that taxis were not to be had, probably for the same reason. At ten to seven both Pound Lane and Knott Lane car parks were full but I managed to locate one of the few remaining spaces in St. Radigund's. Did I have to pay? I saw a queue of over 20 at the only working ticket machine and enquired. It

was difficult to know, as the light by the machine was out, but, yes, it seemed one now has to pay up to 9 pm. It was still raining heavily and some in the queue, also theatre-goers, gave up and went home others, like me, simply arrived late in the theatre soaking wet and more than a little cheesed off.

We do not have the space here for me to tell you what I thought of the new Marlowe and whether I think the reputed £23.5 million spent on it was value for money. In any event it is not strictly an Oaten Hill issue. However parking is an issue affecting us all.

When the new Marlowe was finally passed by the Council planning committee I was, by chance, at the meeting. One of the arguments in favour of it was that it (together with other projects) would be a major attraction, not just in the immediate area, but people would come from all over the south east of England and even from the near continent to what would become an international centre for the arts. This, of course, would benefit local businesses by bringing people into the town who would spend money. Leaving aside for a moment whether such a grandiose scheme was ever likely to be a realistic projection of what would happen, the Council accepted that it might by granting planning permission and have provided some of the funding.

So, three years later, we have our new theatre but what provision has the Council made for sufficient parking to cope with this influx of arts lovers from the south east, France, Belgium and beyond? I accept that it is perfectly possible to reach Canterbury by train, or even bus but, realistically, how many punters are really going to do that? Many will drive and will expect to be able to park within a short walk of the theatre.

The answer is that they have done nothing. In fact we now hear that part of Longport car park is partially to be built on as Ivy Lane is extended back to its original length and St Radigund's is also likely to be developed.

As far as I can see the Council finds itself in a cleft stick. On the one hand they see an need for additional housing (not flats one hopes) in the town centre and, in these straitened economic times with central funding cut, redevelopment of car parks could kill two birds with one stone. Discouraging traffic in the centre would also improve the appalling air quality on the Rheims Way and regular readers will know that I have been complaining on this front all year.

On the other hand, if Canterbury is to be a centre for the arts, and, consequently, bring money in for local businesses and keep unemployment to a minimum, (both clearly desirable) then they have no option but to provide facilities for those arriving by car. A cleft stick indeed.

I have heard it proposed that the park and ride shuttle service should be extended until late evening and that might make a difference. I doubt if it would be a significant one and, if it were economic, would the Council not have done it already?

Another proposal I recently heard was to construct a cruciform tram system with an outer ring of eco-buses. Green this would certainly be but, I suspect, prohibitively expensive and it raises the question of where the trams could go without compromising the remaining medieval buildings.

Both these proposals also take no account of the fact that parking on the periphery of the town and travelling into the centre, be it by bus or by tram, will put some people off, especially at night. It would put me off.

Where does this leave us in Oaten Hill? With fewer and fewer parking spaces in the centre, more and more cars will be seeking to park in the Oaten Hill streets. One thing the Council must do, while it dithers on other issues, is clamp down on parking restrictions in the area and strictly enforce a residents' permit-only regime.

In the meantime, if it's raining and you want to go to the Marlowe, you might as well walk because you will not be any drier if you take the car.

Jerry Kemp

Join the OHDS now

We represent residents in the area bounded by the ring road, Lady Wootton's Green, Longport, the New Dover Road, South Canterbury Road and Old Dover Road.

Our activities are:

- scrutinising planning applications and, where necessary, making comments or opposing.
- attending the Council meetings at which extensions for licensing hours are discussed.
- running a Local History Group which meets regularly and has several publications to its credit.
- keeping a keen eye on the trees in our area and this year have raised the funds to plant 10 more trees.
- looking after the planting in St George's Garden and Biggleston's Link and the big shrubbery at the top of Lichfield Road.
- publishing a newsletter quarterly to keep you informed and also have a website www.oatenhill.org.uk.
- organising for your benefit the annual Spring Party and other social events during the year. This year we had a bring and share picnic at St Augustine's Abbey, a Garden Party at Graham Wood's and an excellent talk on historic maps given by Michael Steed.

☞ We need help from our members so if you can offer any skills, e.g. secretarial, minute-taking, photographic, gardening, willing to deliver newsletter 4 times a year, please indicate on the subscription form.

Treasurer's Notes

We have a good established membership of 247 households and we were pleased to welcome 34 new members in 2011. It would be good to enrol even more new members. If you know someone who you think might like to join—a friend, a neighbour—please do encourage them.

It is party time in March. As usual, we have kept the ticket price as low as possible. As well as a meal we have a quiz and a musical diversion after dinner. If you have not been before, it is a good evening.

All issues of the newsletter except for this have, on the back page, an address label and a note saying you have paid your subscription (or a note reminding you that your subscription is overdue). This has kept our postage costs down and I hope you find it helpful. It does make my life much easier if all you lovely members pay your subscription right away.

On the other side of this page is a membership form for you to send to me with your subscription. If you are buying party tickets and already pay your subscription by Standing Order, please mark it "SO". If you would like to set up a Standing Order, please contact me and I will let you have the appropriate bit of paper.

Sophie

If you are not a member and would like to join your local amenity society and have a say in what goes on in your area, **now** is your chance.

If you are already a member, **NOW** is the time to renew your subscription for **2012**. I would be enormously grateful to you if you could please send in your subscription as soon as possible. If you think you may already have paid for 2012, please do ring me to check (only 26 people have).

The subscription is £5 for a couple or £3 for a single person. If you need your newsletter posted to you, please add £2 to cover postage. Please could you send your remittance (cheques should be made out to OHDS) to **the Hon Treasurer**.

Spring Party Friday 2 March 2012 at the Kent & Canterbury Club

Now is the time to buy your tickets. These are sold to members in strict order of application—last year it was a sell-out—so do apply soon.



To Hon Treasurer & Membership Secretary,
Mrs Sophie Scott, 27 Ersham Road, Canterbury CT1 3AR.

I/we would like to join / renew membership in 2012 of the OHDS

I enclose £3 for single membership	£
We enclose £5 for double membership	£
We live outside the delivery area and need to add £2 for postage	£
I/we would like party tickets at £15 each	£
Total	£

Party tickets will be sent to you within a few days. Membership receipts are only sent if you send a SAE.

Name:

Address:

..... post code:

Phone number in case of queries:

Email address

I am particularly interested in:

I could help with:

Subscriptions for 2012 are now due.

Please send as soon as possible to
the Treasurer & Membership Secretary (Sophie Scott)
at 27 Ersham Rd, Canterbury, CT1 3AR (456285).

CONTACT POINTS FOR OTHER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE PORTFOLIOS:

Fred Whitmore (Chairman), 37 Dover Street, CT1 3HQ (768870)
Gillian Northcott Liles (Vice-Chairman and Secretary), 29 Dover Street, CT1 3HQ (765156)
Sophie Scott (Treasurer and Membership Secretary), 27 Ersham Road, CT1 3AR (456285).
Jerry Kemp (Newsletter Editor), 24 New Dover Road, CT1 3AP (479013)
Carolyn Edrich (Planning), 22 Nunnery Fields, CT1 3JN (765353)
Michael Steed (Local History Group Representation), 36 Dover Street, CT1 3HQ (470837)
Alan Vassall (Planning Matters), 11 Church Street St. Paul's, CT1 1NH (379460)
Marion Bell (Minutes Secretary and New Dover Road Representative), 13 Wells Avenue,
CT1 3YB (459949)
Rob Pratt McMachan (Licensing), 41 Lansdown Road, CT1 3JP. (657 103)
David Kemsley (Trees), 32 Cowdrey Place, CT1 3PD. (472 561)
Jane Farrell, 5 Oaten Hill, CT1 3HP. (766 301)
Grenville Hancox (South Canterbury Representative), 44 Cromwell Road, CT1 3LE (463 867)

The following **Local History** booklets are available at £3 each (plus 50p for postage) from Graham Wood, Lansdown Cottage, Lansdown Road, (472932):

The Holmans of Canterbury (1992)
Dover Street Remembered, enlarged edition (1993)
The Bigglestons of Canterbury (1996)
The Pinnocks of Canterbury (2000)
Nunnery Fields Remembered

General correspondence to the Society should be addressed to:

The OHDS Secretary, 29 Dover Street, Canterbury, CT1 3HQ.

OHDS's website (www.oatenhill.org.uk) contains an e-mail contact for the Secretary where members can raise issues of concern. These can then be forwarded, if necessary, to the appropriate committee member.

This newsletter is produced and brought to you by volunteers: Jerry Kemp (editor), Robert Mathews (desktop publishing) and Deirdre Hawkes (distribution), along with her team of local deliverers. If you would like to contribute or help in any other way, please contact Jerry.

This newsletter provides an update on local issues for all residents living in our neighbourhood, and highlights activities of the residents association. All members of the committee would like to express their appreciation to everyone who has supported the association over the first two full years of its existence, and our hope that you will continue to do so.

South Canterbury Residents Association aims to represent and promote the interests of all who live in the area, so please make us aware of your views. If you are not a member, please strengthen our ability to guide and influence decisions on local issues by joining. A separate membership application form is attached, which also gives details of the current committee. *The cost of membership has been reduced to the 2009 level: £3.00 for individual membership, or £5.00 for an entire household.*

NIMBY?

Your committee has been monitoring and reacting to the continuing changes planned for South Canterbury. Whilst we acknowledge that it is very easy to be accused of NIMBYISM, it is quite apparent that this southern part of Canterbury city and district is ripe for development and clearly illuminated on the radar screen of CCC for realising many of its aspirations.

The original impetus for the formation of SCRA — a totally unsuited, disproportionate and inappropriate development of residential property for high density housing in South Canterbury Road — has been replaced by equally unsuitable and inappropriate plans for large scale strategic development in our area. The Ridlands Football Hub proposal has not gone away! The Local Development Plan has only temporarily been kicked into touch since the coalition government was elected. Thus, 70 acres of prime agricultural land are currently for sale in Nackington Road, Ridlands Farm is still available for change of use, and much Thanington farmland is ready for sale to the highest strategic bidder.

Your committee is in increasing contact with other Canterbury residents associations that may welcome our collective support in resisting inappropriate change to our district and city. In turn we may need their support should the Ridlands project or other plans surface. The prospective Nackington Road and current University Slopes developments are areas many of us feel concerned about. Unless members object, it is our intention to lend our weight to campaigns about these proposals.

Milton Road

Milton Road is the rather unkempt, pot-holed roadway that links Cromwell Road with South Canterbury Road. At our AGM it was proposed that SCRA “adopt” the road by creating two parallel tree-planted areas at the Cromwell Road end, and installing posts at regular intervals to separate the road from the cultivated area.

Once written agreement has been obtained from occupants of numbers 8 and 10 Cromwell Rd, we intend to dig, fertilize and plant the two strips of ground, creating an orchard environment with mixed fruit trees. Who knows, maybe a bench may find its way there, south facing and providing a small but much needed community facility for recreation/communication. The project will not only make the area beautiful but also prevent drivers from carelessly parking their vehicles across the pavement.



Milton Road: a South Canterbury eyesore.



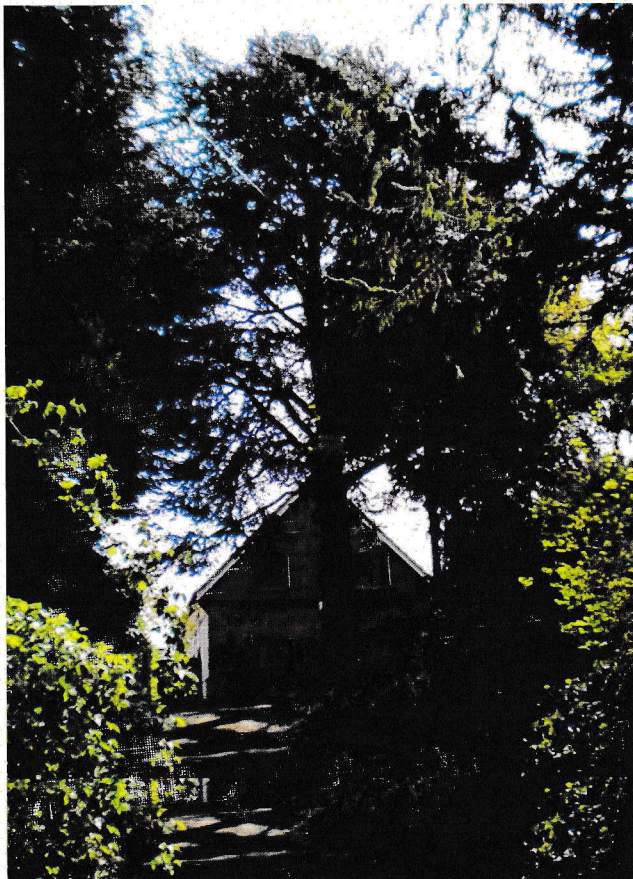
What will become of the 70 acres of prime farmland on Nackington Road, said to be on offer for £2 million?



Progress? Where mature trees stood a few months ago, huge and truly hideous floodlights now loom over Canterbury's famous cricket ground.

Other news . . .

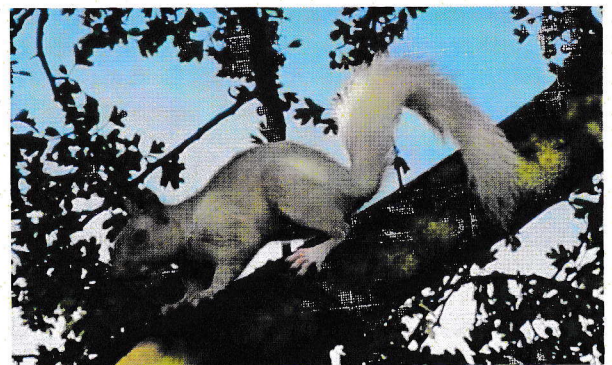
View of the new 15 metre high mobile telephone mast erected on land belonging to Canterbury Bowling Club. Despite vocal opposition from local residents concerned about health issues, as well as the impact of this intrusion in what is supposed to be a conservation area, with its view towards the Kent Downs (designated in 1968 an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), CCC agreed to this proposal and the Club, normally so fastidious about the appearance of its ground, has gone ahead. An unwelcome new neighbour.



Saved from the axe. This landmark cedar tree in Puckle Lane recently survived an application by an insurance company to have it felled — but it required determined action by the house owner, with strong support from SCRA.

Parking

SCRA continues to be very active with respect to parking issues. We are pleased to note the introduction of the new shuttle bus from Dover Road Park and Ride which, together with the improved no. 25 service from the central bus station, should help reduce the need for hospital staff and patients to bring cars into South Canterbury.



South Canterbury has no public open space whatsoever — despite being a prime family housing area, there is nowhere for children to play — something SCRA intends to campaign about in future. But, so long as we are not overrun by concrete and have all our trees cut down, we do have some wildlife! Albino squirrel photographed by Alexander Armstrong in a Cromwell Road garden on 27th September 2010.

SCRA Little Lunch 2011

Following our successful experiment last year, during the summer/early autumn we intend to hold another Sunday lunchtime social event. The venue will be in Ethelbert Road, at a date to be announced.



And Finally – the Local Elections

Don't forget the City Council Elections taking place on May 5. Your vote counts and could be even more important with regard to developments within the City and the South Canterbury Residents area.