

# OATEN HILL & SOUTH CANTERBURY ASSOCIATION



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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No. 31

digital edition

## GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY: IT'S CAKE AND BUBBLY TIME!

### CONTENTS

Editorial	p. 1
Planning	p. 2
Membership	p. 3
Finance	p. 3
Green Team	p. 3
OHSCA Healthcare (OHC)	p. 4
Social Events (SEA)	p. 4
OHDS – 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary	p. 5
Two personal views	p. 6
Oaten Hill Pharmacy	p. 7
Joan Pritchard	p. 7
Committee 2023–2024	p. 8
Dates for Your Diary	p. 8
Digital Extra (contents)	p. 9

All OHSCA Members are invited to gather at the Summer Lunch (28<sup>th</sup> July – see page 4) to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of *Oaten Hill and District Society*. A special anniversary cake is being prepared, and sparkling wine will flow. In this issue Margaret Bower and Mike Brain offer an account of the origin of OHDS, and why its achievements and legacy are so worthy of our celebration (p. 5). This includes notice of the special *Story of Oaten Hill* event on 1<sup>st</sup> September. There is also a strong possibility of a commemorative tree planting (p. 3).

Since the April newsletter, we suddenly find ourselves in the middle of a General Election. However, we should not let this distract us from the crucially important matter of the Canterbury & District Local Plan – now coming to a climax. David Kemsley has again stepped forward with a wonderfully comprehensive review and critique of the current state of this vitally important process (p. 2).

Newsletter editors often lament the lack of input from members – and this remains true for our newsletter with

respect to unsolicited letters. However, there is growing use of the extended, 'digital extra' section, which has few limitations on space or use of colour. In this extra we have an excellent account of St Martin's Church by Nigel Fletcher-Jones – which includes the image of Queen Bertha (ca 565–601) shown on the right. Another is a very engaging history of Canterbury Bowling Club, by John Andrews. We also have all the latest on talks and the two poetry evenings that Lorn Durrani has organised, a piece about bluebells as a follow up to this year's bluebell walk, and the latest news on the Local Plan.

The digital edition is freely available to all members. However, you can only receive it at the time of publication if you have an email address that you have shared with the Membership Secretary (and signed the necessary Data Protection declaration, which is on the membership form). We don't know – but suspect – that quite a lot of members are reluctant to give their email to the Association, perhaps for fear of being bombarded with unwanted messages, or the risk that their information might be sold to commercial organisations, or be 'hacked' by criminals. Well, all I can say is that there is no evidence of such 'bad stuff' ever having happened – and only those very few committee members with a need for access to the membership list do have access – and they are meticulous about keeping your information safe. Of course, some Members really do not have email, which is why we still produce and distribute paper copies of the newsletter. But as you see with this edition, only the most important information that we have can still be notified in this way (the first eight pages). Much of interest is increasingly only available in the digital (pdf) format newsletter. These are also our archival versions, held on the website.

Finally, gardeners amongst you, please do look at the *Crie de Coeur* from the Green Team on page 3: **Your Association Needs You!**



Dick Vane-Wright, Editor

## PLANNING

### ACRA (Alliance of Canterbury Residents Associations)

OHSCA is a member of the Alliance of Canterbury Residents Associations. ACRA has responded to the recent CCC formal public consultations on the Draft Local Plan (LP) and Air Quality Action Plan, which concluded on 3<sup>rd</sup> June. When combined, the ACRA submissions run to some 16,000 words. Accordingly there is only space here for a very brief summary of the main points. Full copies are available on request to OHSCA (via the Hon. Sec. – contact details, p. 8).

### CCC Draft Local Plan

ACRA welcomes some changes in the tone and emphasis of the revised draft Plan, compared with the previous draft published by the City Council in early 2022. In particular, we endorse the intentions behind:

A Transport Strategy which focuses on achievable modal shift through improved bus provision, more attractive routes for walking and cycling, and the repurposing of parts of the existing road network.

An Open Spaces Strategy, a Green Infrastructure Strategy, and a Tree and Woodland Strategy, which evince an intention to address climate change, protect and enhance the natural environment, create open spaces, and foster biodiversity.

However, ACRA does believe that by adopting this revised Plan, CCC would be exposing itself to substantial risk of failure in a number of areas – e.g.

We harbour reservations about the extent to which improved access to, and broader use of, public transport envisaged in the potentially more sustainable Transport Strategy can be funded. In the absence of low emission zones or congestion charges levied directly on motorists, or workplace parking space levies on employers, it is hard to see how the County and City councils will find the revenue required.

We also have reservations about the true determination of the City and County councils to extend measures to pursue carbon sequestration, and enhance the natural environment within the urban and suburban fabric of the district's city and towns. Tree and hedge planting initiatives are not firmly indicated.

There is additionally a real danger that sustainability-focused improvements will be undermined by an unrealistic and unnecessary emphasis on growing the housing supply and the amount of employment floor-space by new construction, leading the City Council to rely too much on greenfield development sites. Specific risks are:

Increased pressure on the road network, leading to further congestion.

Increased pressure on other infrastructure, especially sewage and waste water disposal facilities and water supply (pending actual commissioning of a new reservoir).

Further loss of biodiversity and destruction of the natural landscape, especially just beyond the current urban fringes of Canterbury and Whitstable and on land adjoining the Blean Woods AHLV (Area of High Landscape Value).

It is partly for these reasons that we urge the City Council to rethink its approach to housing supply numbers, so that some admirable positive aspirations revealed by the Local Plan might be more realistically pursued and potentially achieved.

### Overall conclusion

If the City Council does not now question the annual housing supply number for Canterbury District in the period 2025–2040, which officers surmise an Inspector is likely to insist on, the opportunity to minimise the permanent loss of greenfield land around Canterbury may be foregone forever. That would be a tragedy for the long-surviving rural surrounds of this great city, a detriment to the fine setting of our WHS (World Heritage Site), and a recipe for exacerbated road congestion around and across the urban area in perpetuity (presuming no construction of any eastern or northern by-passes, and given only modest modal shift – as per recent experience).

We urge the CCC Cabinet to task officers with preparing arguments, to be used in discussions with an Inspector, as to why the city of Canterbury, taken together with its surrounding district, is a special case.

Arguments can readily be constructed, by reference to the city's rural hinterland, the setting of its WHS, and its inadequate infrastructure. We also urge the Cabinet to move away from the use of 2014 demographic statistics in its HNA (Housing Needs Assessment), since they are not fit for purpose as a baseline for calculating true local housing need in our district.

Finally, we call for a re-appraisal of the scope for designating more brownfield land for residential development, and redundant commercial buildings on already developed sites for residential use.

### CCC Air Quality Action Plan

ACRA's response was drafted by a professional specialist in health and care policy research and analysis. The review, as briefly summarised below, is very worrying.

Current policies to address air quality fail to adequately ensure that air quality in Canterbury will be improved. ACRA has no confidence that the Council's goal of a neutral air quality impact is achievable based on the preferred spatial development plan and other proposals in the LP. Simply stating that the LP will be air quality neutral without demonstrating how existing pollution levels will be reduced where currently relevant, or how this will be achieved in future, is a major flaw in the LP and Air Quality Plan.

The Air Quality Action Plan as written does not take into account current DEFRA guidance on the development of such plans, nor does it demonstrate compliance with national objectives for pollution reductions, as required by paragraph 192 of the NPPF (National Policy Planning Framework).

Despite air quality being a public health issue, the City Council failed to involve public health specialists in drawing up the plan (as recommended in DEFRA guidance to local authorities). Notably, no reference is made in the plan to whether proposals will minimise people's exposure to pollution and thus protect human health.

There is no detailed plan regarding delivery of reductions needed to meet current and future air quality targets, any reference to how to achieve standards considered safe for human health by the World Health Organisation, or even show how policies align with national government policy on improving air quality. Without clear actionable strategies to reduce emissions from vehicles and other sources of air pollution (including existing housing, commercial premises etc.), relevant reductions in pollution will not be achieved.

## Mountfield Park

Following back-office planning work on the provision of utility services such as power supply and water, the developer will shortly be in a position to tell people more about the detail of their plans, through a new website. This will also provide information on upcoming events, such as design workshops and meetings, and feature surveys for residents to share views, and help shape the future of the development.

*David J. Kemsley, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

## MEMBERSHIP

We currently have more than 230 member households! Thank you very much to all those of you – more than 50 – who renewed in April. Also, our grateful thanks for the generous donations we have received to date – more than £1,000. We are always happy to hear of any suggestions from members for small projects requiring funding.

There are still a few members who have not renewed. If you are planning to renew, please do so before 31<sup>st</sup> July. After this date newsletters and email notifications will not be sent to you. The back of your paper newsletter will indicate if you have already renewed or not. Please remember to complete a membership form if any of your details have changed, such as email address and phone number, or you are a returning member. You can download the form from our web site membership page:

<https://www.ohsca.org/join.html>

Please send payment and membership forms to OHSCA, c/o Sophie Scott, 27 Ersham Road, Canterbury CT1 3AR with cash/cheque subscription, cheques payable to OHSCA. If you prefer to pay by bank transfer, please add the first line of your address to the reference as it will be easier to identify you. Our bank details are: NatWest, Sort code: 60-04-27, account no: 90612094.

If you are planning to resign, please let us know so we don't keep sending you reminders.

*Sophie Scott (Membership Secretary) and Lucy Fletcher-Jones (website and events bulletins manager)*

## FINANCE

### OHDS and OHSCA 50 Year Celebration

It was agreed at a recent committee meeting that we plant one or two trees in the locality to celebrate 50 years of the Association, and its origin in OHDS. The Kent and Canterbury hospital is a resource we nearly all

will use at some time or another, and it was agreed that we would approach the management team to ask if the planting of trees was a possibility. The hospital responded positively.

We have decided to ask members for tree suggestions and possible places for the trees to be planted. This will obviously need to be cleared by the hospital Estates department. One suggestion is *Ginkgo biloba* – the maidenhair tree. The leaves of *Ginkgo* have a long history of being used in herbal medicines to treat circulatory problems. Perhaps a fitting choice as our William Harvey hospital is named after the first physician to correctly describe the circulation of the blood. William Harvey was born in 1578, in Folkestone.



*Ginkgo biloba* in full autumn glory (photo credit: p. 7)

We are open to further suggestions for the type of tree, and where we might site them. Please mail the treasurer with your ideas (contact details, p. 8).

*Jane Pollok (Honorary Treasurer)*

## GREEN TEAM

Over many years, OHSCA members have endeavoured to create, develop and maintain gardens and planting in public areas. These efforts have long been coordinated and managed by the OHDS/OHSCA Green Team.

For personal reasons, some of our lead Green Team gardeners have struggled this season to find their usual spare time (and energy). Nature and the seasons don't wait for humans, however, and the gardens have no such limitations. All of our green spaces would now benefit from some attention.

If you have a little time to spare and an inclination to improve the appearance of the neighbourhood, please feel free to dead-head, weed or tidy the gardens at Milton Road, St. George's (between the roundabout, Subway and the old cinema) or the Fire Station beds.

For more information please make initial contact with the Green Team via the Hon. Secretary:

[secretary@ohsca.org](mailto:secretary@ohsca.org), or 01227 459949

Thank you.

*Sophie Scott, Dave Goddard and Deirdre Hawkes*

## OHC (OHSCA HealthCare monitoring group)

Other commitments permitting, we continue to keep in touch with Health and Care developments in Kent and Medway, but with this Newsletter due for publication before the General Election date, meaningful non-political comment would currently be difficult. Not surprisingly, the NHS is prominent amid the political promises, and its course in the coming years will no doubt be among the consequences of the election result.

The most recent meeting of the Kent & Medway Integrated Care Board (ICB) was held on 7<sup>th</sup> May, some two weeks before the election date was announced; but of course we all knew that the election must be soon. I was away, and unable to follow the meeting on-line, but it is difficult to find in the meeting papers much sign of contingency thinking about the initiatives which will arise in the new Parliament. There are of course already plenty of pressures on the local NHS: dentistry; the under-provision of, and on-going wastage from, general practice; performance issues at hospitals, notably in East Kent; financial under-performance, this also notably at the East Kent Hospitals – while paradoxically, a great deal of admirable NHS care continues to be anecdotally reported.

Dispassionately viewed, it will be interesting to see how the next government addresses all this. For a long time, reorganisation has been the NHS's default solution, perhaps not least for its opportunities for management personnel changes. But it's only a couple of years since the ICB system started – a bit soon for major change, even by NHS standards – and important features of it, such as the territorial Health & Care Partnerships, show signs of bedding in effectively; and as I wrote nearly 18 months ago, the Patricia Hewitt Report, showing how the Integrated Care concept could be made to work, is still on the shelf.

Watch this space!

*Denis Linfoot, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

## SOCIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES GROUP (SEA)

SEA organises social activities and events to bring the community together. Mailchimp reminders are sent out to those members who have provided their email address to Sophie Scott. 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, via [social@ohsca.org](mailto:social@ohsca.org).

### SEA activities in 2024

- **Monthly coffee mornings** Coffee mornings continue every fourth Wednesday of the month, at the Hampton by Hilton Hotel, 7 St Margaret's Street, 11.00–12.00. Future dates: 24<sup>th</sup> July, 28<sup>th</sup> August, 25<sup>th</sup> September, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, and 27<sup>th</sup> November (no meeting in December).
- **Games and social event** continue to take place on the first Monday of each month, the next being on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024, 7 pm, at *The Phoenix* pub, 67 Old Dover Road.



- **Special Walks:** A Bluebell walk in Whitehill Wood took place on 27<sup>th</sup> April (report in Digital Extra). A walk from Canterbury to Fordwich, along the northern margin of Old Park, is being planned for July; details to be announced by Mailchimp.
- **Spring Party:** The Spring Party took place on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6.30 pm at the Kent & Canterbury Club with a talk by Martin Latham, Manager at Waterstones, about his book *The Bookseller's Tale*, followed by a buffet meal. This event was very enjoyable but ran at a loss financially as too few members attended.
- **Talks:** Since starting talks at the Kent & Canterbury Club in 2022, we have arranged 4 talks in 2022, 7 in 2023, and 6 for 2024 – the most recent being the first of two poetry evenings, held on 4<sup>th</sup> June – which proved to be an exceptionally entertaining and stimulating occasion (report in Digital Extra). The remaining sessions for 2024 include the second poetry evening (10<sup>th</sup> December), with another five poets, and two talks: Stephen Scoffham on 23<sup>rd</sup> September about sustainability (see p. 16, Spring 2024 digital edition), and Phil Perkins on 18<sup>th</sup> November, who will be “Giving the Etruscan gods their due” (additional details in digital edition).
- **Summer Lunch Party 2024:** Last year the Summer Lunch was held at the home of Sarah Whittall and Michael Wood. Gill Prett has kindly agreed to host this year's summer lunch party on 28<sup>th</sup> July at 12.30 pm (55 Cromwell Rd), at which we will be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Oaten Hill & District Society (which merged with South Canterbury Residents Association



in 2016, to become OHSCA) with bubbly – and a celebration cake – both provided by the OHSCA Committee. Members will bring food and drink contributions as usual (look out for Mailchimp messages for more information).

- **The Gardening Interest Group (GIG).** A small group enjoyed a trip to Goodnestone Gardens on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, meeting with Paul Bagshaw, the Head Gardener. The walled Gardens were particularly beautiful – topped only by the excellent tea rooms! The annual plant share took place successfully on 26<sup>th</sup> May, at the home of Hazel & Dick Vane-Wright. 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.
- **Weekly walks:** take place every Wednesday. There is a WhatsApp group who communicate in advance about whether or not the walk will take place. Anyone wanting to be in the WhatsApp group should contact Alison Culverwell or Lucy Fletcher-Jones.

SEA sub-committee  
*Susi Brain, Alison Culverwell, Helly Langley, Margot Leslie, Hazel & Dick Vane-Wright, Lorna Durrani*  
(Convenor: [social@ohsca.org](mailto:social@ohsca.org)).

## OATEN HILL & DISTRICT SOCIETY / OATEN HILL & SOUTH CANTERBURY ASSOCIATION 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY, 1974–2024

The Oaten Hill & District Society was founded in 1974 in response to the loss by redevelopment of important local buildings. The catalyst was a planning application to convert the house known as The Shrubbery, at the corner of Oaten Hill and Upper Chantry Lane, into offices. A Steering Committee of local residents was formed and a constitution adopted:

- To preserve the distinctive village character of the area.
- To enable members of the community to control their physical environment.
- To promote a balance between residential and commercial interests.
- To inform local residents of facilities open to them for improving their property.
- To provide a forum for residents.

Early champions of the local environment and concern for the area's history were Doris Hughes and Nikki Young. Their contributions have been recorded by erecting plaques and planting trees – for Nikki at the junction of Upper Chantry Lane and New Dover Road, and for Doris on the green at the bottom of Ivy Lane, near the Chaucer Hotel. In the picture, Doris is in the centre, with Nikki seated.



The Society merged with the South Canterbury Residents Association in November 2016, to form the present Oaten Hill & South Canterbury Association.

Not unmindful of the ancient history of the locality, the Oaten Hill Local History Group was formed and archives established including photographic and other records of noteworthy streets and buildings, oral recordings with transcripts of over 100 local residents, and a series of books were created and published, detailing local notable families, the Taylors, Bigglestons and Holmans, together with the histories of local streets, Nunnery Fields, Old Dover Road, Longport, Ivy Lane, Oaten Hill and Dover Street.

The demise in the mid-1990s of the much loved Woods Hardware Store in Dover Street was recorded by the Society by a video of interviews of Mrs Wood and customers, and much of the surplus stock was transferred to the Beaney Museum for the recreation of the ambiance of the store.

The Society also was successful in naming Bigglestons Link and Holmans Meadow Car Park, later augmented by the Local History Group's Heritage sign

board illustrating the firm's history of windmill construction and later of agricultural (mainly steam driven) machines. The pictures below show Geoffrey Biggleston standing beneath the street sign named after his family (and reflecting the successful lobbying of the Local History Group), and the Holmans Meadow Car Park heritage board created and installed by LHG.



A further way of familiarizing residents with the history of Oaten Hill has been the provision of accompanied walks around the area. Many walks were organized by Doris Hughes and Michael Steed, including the history of the "Tudor Tyrants".



In the picture above, taken at the unveiling of the heritage board, Michael Steed (front left) is seen explaining the history of Holmans Meadow in the presence of Edward Holman (front right). Also present were Graham Wood (centre), former Treasurer of the Local History Group, and Derek Ray (rear), previous LHG Chairman.

In 2019 the History Group's "The Story of Oaten Hill" was awarded the Hayes Canterbury Award as the best historical or archaeological publication of the year. To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, an accompanied walk around Oaten Hill by the principal author of the book, David Potter, will take place on 1<sup>st</sup> September.

With the exception of the Taylor family, the books, transcripts and other archival materials are available from [history@ohsca.org](mailto:history@ohsca.org).

*Margaret Bower (Chair) and Mike Brain (Secretary),  
Local History Group*

## A VIEW FROM THE EAST – AND WITHIN

*Teresa Lau, originally from Hong Kong, is now a Canterbury resident who has quite recently become an OHSCA member. Here she offers what you might call an outsider's inside view of us and our city – or even an insider's outside view.*

Canterbury, a renowned tourist city, is home to UNESCO World Heritage sites that attract visitors worldwide. The Cathedral and St. Martin's Church are icons of the city. Its excellent schools and prestigious universities have attracted hundreds of thousands of international students. Out of the 70,000-strong community, more than half are students. This has made the city full of life and boosted the property market as a whole. However, I had not heard of Canterbury until I came here 3 years ago.

The weather in September 2021 was cool and breezy, with moderate wind speed and humidity. As I departed the train station, the chill seemed to freeze my face, urging me to shove my hands deep into my pockets for warmth. The wind tousled my hair. I sneezed a lot and had a runny nose. The wind was so strong that it brought back memories of my travel experience in Chicago where I had to battle the gusts. Finally, I hauled my luggage to the city centre to buy a pullover! The locals have truly mastered handling their unpredictable weather – by ignoring it. They simply walk in the rain. If you notice someone holding an umbrella, it's most likely a Chinese person.

Saying "sorry" seems to be an integral part of local culture in the UK. Many locals frequently use this term for various reasons. If one were to count the number of "sorries" said in a day, it could be 5 to 10 times. In a year, it could be 3,650 times! It begs the question: is this expression taken seriously, or is it merely a social norm here?

Britons are well-known for their love of gardens. Lying down or sleeping on the grass is an enjoyment. If they drop food on the grass, they simply pick it up and eat it. It wasn't until I myself lay on the grass did I truly comprehend why this pastime is so enjoyable. The smell of grass is refreshing after rain. You could hear the rustling wind, birds singing and leaves whispering. You feel as if you could reach out and touch the sky. The feeling is amazing and wonderful. It's as if you could smile at the sky and talk to it. Observing the ever-changing shapes and movement of the clouds, you feel like you are on top of the world.

In the UK, the most common way to open a dialogue is "have a cup of tea". The locals' preference for tea and coffee is so pronounced that they rarely drink water. This might contribute to the fact that close to 10 percent of the population has kidney problems. Just like many locals, I also find English tea accompanied by soy milk a truly delightful combination.

Enriched with captivating natural landscapes and woodlands, Canterbury offers numerous trails and woodlands for exploration. King's Wood and Blean Woods, just to name two.

Historic villages such as Elham, Stelling Minnis and Staple offer breath-taking scenic views and are definitely worth visiting. Walking in nature is fun and free. Imagine you are embraced by towering trees and stunning green all around you. What a wonderful life in Canterbury!

*Teresa Lau, June 2024*

## A VIEW OF A DAY IN THE LIFE

*We are delighted to report that Peter Whisson – a long standing member of the Association now contemplating retirement – has recently been co-opted to the main OHSCA Committee. In this article, Peter presents an introspective account of a day in his life:*

### The Twelfth of May 2021

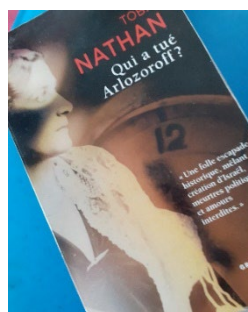
12 May is Mass Observation day, when the public is invited to record whatever they happen to be doing that day and submit it to the MO database. It didn't seem to get much notice this year, or perhaps I just missed it. Anyway, I decided to do it for fun three years ago ... but when the moment came to upload and send it, it wouldn't go. So much for that. Details aside, not too much has changed in the years since, so the account can still serve as a representative 'Day in the Life' of your new committee member ...

I am roused as ever by Bud (cat, tortoiseshell). It is 5 o'clock. I make a leisurely breakfast between 5.30 and 7. It consists of cereal with prunes; coffee; fried potato slices, mushrooms, half a (vegetarian) Lincoln sausage, spaghetti rings (from tin), toast; then marmalade on toast – and tea. Sounds a lot, but the quantities are modest. I listen to the radio which stands on top of the fridge: 'Farming Today' then the 'Today programme' until 6.45 – then Radio 3 till 8.15 when I leave the house.

There is one item of news – legislation going through for the micro-chipping of cats. This would be annoying and in any case completely unnecessary for Bud, who never wanders!

I then read a few pages of *Qui a tue Arlozoroff?* by Tobie Nathan. The paragraphs are on Goebbels and his psyche. This book was a Christmas present from my daughter, who encourages me to read French, which I do for a change from English, and as a mild mental challenge. I then read a few pages on Sultan Selim I in Caroline Finkel's *Othman's Dream*, a history of the Ottoman Empire. I like works of history that survey decades ... centuries ... a millennium.

I leave home for work at 8.15. This entails a 30 minute walk across Canterbury from west to east. On the way I pick up plums and a tub of hummus from Tesco. I pay by cash in a self-service machine. I always prefer to use coins and notes for petty transactions. Cash comes from clients – though these days most settle by card or online.



I am owner of a tuition business – which dates back to 2006 – and provide most tuition myself. I could retire, but am happy to carry on. I currently employ one part-timer (a graduate student at the University of Kent). Business is recovering quickly after the second lockdown of January and February.

The first student of the day comes in at 9.30 – he is Polish, aged 16; his mother is working for the NHS; and they have recently arrived in the UK. He plans to take GCSE exams in Maths and Physics next year. This was our first session. We worked on ‘number sequences’ and on ‘energy transfer’.

The second student is a regular. He comes in at 11.15, accompanied as always by his mother. Being an elective mute, he has been home-educated since primary school. I provide a Maths and English curriculum – next year he should be sitting GCSE’s – today the maths was proportion calculations, and the English, *Macbeth*. His mother occupies herself at a desktop computer while we work for the two hours. Her hobby is writing novels: she pays for them to be printed in paperback.

Lunch is a salad and cheese sandwich and some hummus. Then a 15 minute siesta. Then, a few minutes of self-indulgence, turning the pages of a book devoted to the paintings of Egon Schiele. I have missed gallery-going (mostly London) since the pandemic. I am proposing to collect, one by one, the whole Phaidon Colour Library series (40) secondhand – so far I have five.

Four students to see in after-school hours – three primary and one secondary, for Maths, English and Science. Science I delegate to my graduate helper, who has the background and now is training in medicine.

I have one more in the evening – but we work online through Skype. This student used to live in Canterbury and attend in person, but then moved to Dover. Today, because his Maths topic for the week – velocity-time graphs – is not as challenging as he expected, our 45 minute session becomes a discussion on a career in engineering – his ambition being to work in the high-powered environment of a Formula 1 racing garage.

And so to the end of the day and the gathering together of papers and folders and tidying up the room for tomorrow – when there will potentially be 6 students between lunch time and early evening. I decide to cycle home instead of walk (as the bike is already here). I do not stop to make purchases in Tesco. Sometimes there are good bargain reductions on food in the evening – but today I need nothing.

My customary evening meal is centred on vegetables boiled slowly. I listen again to the radio in the kitchen. A programme of some personal interest on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Bangladesh – I spent two years as a VSO volunteer there in the late 1970s.

So to bed about 10.30 pm. It is never a problem to fall asleep.

Overall there is a shade of – as Samuel Johnson once put it – *vitam continet una dies* – one day encapsulates the whole of my life. For him this implied misery and frustration. Now I find the thought less unwelcome. I have a pleasant and predictable occupation, calm surroundings, a well-ordered daily routine and little stress.

*Peter Whisson*

## OATEN HILL PHARMACY

Many residents make use of the pharmacy at 29 Oaten Hill. Currently owned and run by Boots UK Ltd, this arrangement is coming to an end. The pharmacy will close on 27<sup>th</sup> July – and is expected to reopen under new management on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July. Exactly what this means regarding patient records is not clear (to me at least). However, it seems that for online repeat prescriptions, if you use the Boots ‘app’ and wish to continue with that, then you would have to collect your medications at a Boots store (e.g. Whitefriars). But if you still wish to use the Oaten Hill pharmacy, then I believe the NHS app will be OK. However, if you rely on Oaten Hill Pharmacy for other medical services, I suggest you make your own enquiries.

*Editor, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2014*

## JOAN PRITCHARD

I am saddened to report the recent death of Joan Pritchard, just a few weeks before her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. Joan was a well-known resident of Cromwell Rd, active in the local church, and a long time member and supporter of OHDS and OHSCA. For a long time she was one of our greatly valued and reliable newsletter deliverers. Joan was also an Age Concern organiser for many years. (*Ed.*)



A New Dover Rd flowering cherry in full bloom.  
Cllr Michael Northey arranged for this tree, and others, to be planted some years ago from his tree budget (photo: Marion Bell).

## Non-OHSCA image credits

Maidenhair tree, p. 3: Wikimedia Commons ©  
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<https://www.dreamstime.com/sad-person-holding-i-m-sorry-sign-vector-cartoon-stick-figure-illustration-guilty-as-apology-character-image265684890>

## OHSCA COMMITTEE 2023–2024 AND CONTACTS LIST

Chair:	Vacant (currently the Committee operates a rotating Chair)
<b>Marion Bell</b>	Hon. Secretary/main OHSCA Contact: 13 Wells Avenue, CT1 3YB; Tel. 01227 459949 or mobile 07850 576655; <a href="mailto:secretary@ohsca.org">secretary@ohsca.org</a>
<b>Jane Pollok</b>	Honorary Treasurer: <a href="mailto:treasurer@ohsca.org">treasurer@ohsca.org</a>
<b>Sophie Scott</b>	Membership Secretary/Green Team/Planning subcommittee: 27 Ersham Road CT1 3AR Tel. 01227 456285; <a href="mailto:sophie01@btinternet.com">sophie01@btinternet.com</a>
<b>David Kemsley</b>	ACRA rep./OHC subcommittee/Press Liaison: <a href="mailto:press@ohsca.org">press@ohsca.org</a>
<b>Helly Langley</b>	Committee Member/Planning subcommittee
<b>Lucy Fletcher-Jones</b>	Website Coordinator/events bulletin alerts: <a href="mailto:website@ohsca.org">website@ohsca.org</a>
<b>Peter Whisson</b>	Committee Member (co-opted)

Planning	Additional volunteers needed (please contact <a href="mailto:secretary@ohsca.org">secretary@ohsca.org</a> )
Local History Group	Chair LHG: Maggie Bower, <a href="mailto:maggie_bower18@outlook.com">maggie_bower18@outlook.com</a> Secretary LHG: Michael Brain, tel. 01227 767343; <a href="mailto:history@ohsca.org">history@ohsca.org</a> For information about Local History publications, email: <a href="mailto:history@ohsca.org">history@ohsca.org</a> – or go to OHSCA website: <a href="https://www.ohsca.org/history.html">https://www.ohsca.org/history.html</a>
SEA convenor	<i>Lorna Durrani</i> : <a href="mailto:social@ohsca.org">social@ohsca.org</a> (current members listed on p. 4)
OHC	<i>David Kemsley, Alison Culverwell, Denis Linfoot</i> (convenor), <i>Dick Vane-Wright</i>
Newsletter distribution	<i>Deirdre Hawkes</i>
Tree champion	<i>Helly Langley</i>
Newsletter editor	<i>Dick Vane-Wright</i> : <a href="mailto:dickvanewright@gmail.com">dickvanewright@gmail.com</a>

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

### Some useful contacts

- For problems with student neighbours contact University of Kent student community liaison officer: 01227 816156 or email [communityliaison@kent.ac.uk](mailto:communityliaison@kent.ac.uk); <https://www.kent.ac.uk/student-services/community/index.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 illegal parking: <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/parking-and-roads/report-illegal-parking/>
- To report graffiti (with possibility of removal depending on circumstances) <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/environmental-problems/report-graffiti>
- For information about Cathedral Pass: <https://www.ohsca.org/publications.html> [Spring 2023 Newsletter, p.1]
- For St Augustine's Abbey Annual Pass, go to: <https://www.ohsca.org/news.html>

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OHSCA 2024 dates, July to November		23 September	Talk: <a href="#">Stephen Scoffham (p.4)</a>
1 July	<a href="#">games/social at <i>The Phoenix</i> (p. 4)</a>	25 September	<a href="#">Coffee morning (p. 4)</a>
9 July	<a href="#">Local History Group meeting (p. 8)</a>	7 October	<a href="#">games/social <i>Phoenix</i> (p. 4)</a>
24 July	<a href="#">Coffee morning (p. 4)</a>	23 October	<a href="#">Coffee morning (p. 4)</a>
28 July	<a href="#">Celebratory Summer Lunch (pp. 1, 4)</a>	25 October	<a href="#">OHSCA AGM (Kendall Hall)</a>
5 August	<a href="#">games/social at <i>The Phoenix</i> (p. 4)</a>	5 November	<a href="#">games/social <i>Phoenix</i> (p. 4)</a>
28 August	<a href="#">Coffee morning (p. 4)</a>	12 November	<a href="#">LHG meeting (p. 8)</a>
1 September	<a href="#">Story of <i>Oaten Hill</i> (p. 6)</a>	18 November	<a href="#">Talk: Phil Perkins (p. 4)</a>
2 September	<a href="#">games/social at <i>The Phoenix</i> (p. 4)</a>	27 November	<a href="#">Coffee morning (p. 4)</a>
10 September	<a href="#">Local History Group (LHG – p. 8)</a>	10 December	<a href="#">Poetry Evening (p. 4)</a>



## DIGITAL EXTRA

### CONTENTS

Out and About, Here and There	9–10
History of Canterbury Bowling Club	11
St Martin's Church	12–13
Friends of Westgate Parks	14–15
Bluebells	16–18
Talks	19
Poet's Corner	20–24
Stop Press (Local Plan – what next?)	25



Valerian, Milton Road (12<sup>th</sup> June 2024)

## OUT AND ABOUT, HERE AND THERE



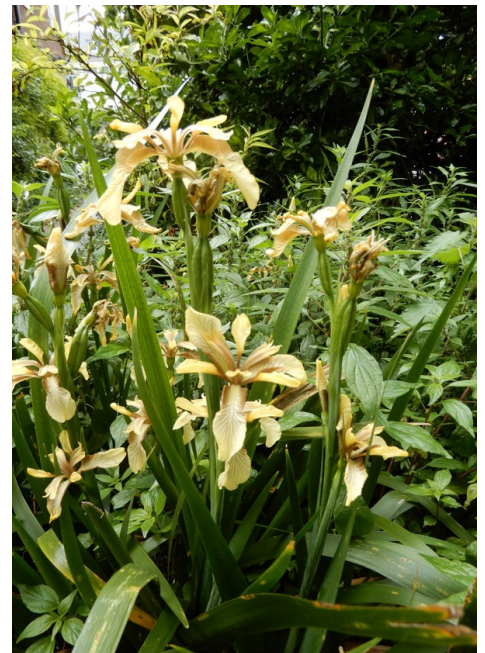
Clowes Wood, 13<sup>th</sup> April (another year?)



The Phoenix (first Mondays)



The Shrubbery – where it all began



St George's Garden (12<sup>th</sup> June)



The Useless Pluckers of Whitstable (BrightShadow, 8<sup>th</sup> June)



OHSCA Plant Share (26<sup>th</sup> May)



## HISTORY OF CANTERBURY BOWLING CLUB

When asked by your esteemed editor to write a few words about the history of Canterbury Bowling Club, I had to check that our history fell within the bailiwick of OHSCA. I am pleased to report that for brief periods we might have been a little borderline but, for the vast bulk of our 127-year existence, we have been firmly within your sphere of interest.

People will recall that Sir Francis Drake did not allow himself to be dragged away prematurely from his game of bowls when the Spanish Armada hove into view in 1588. It took rather longer for the gentlemen of

Canterbury to decide that playing bowls was a very fashionable thing to do and in May 1897 six gentlemen bowlers established a Club to play Bowls.

In deference to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, they named the Club the "Diamond Jubilee Bowling Club", a name that would only survive for two years after which our current title of Canterbury Bowling Club was adopted. The Honorary President of the Club was the sitting MP for Canterbury Mr John Henniker Heaton and the Honorary Vice-President was Mr Collard, Mayor of Canterbury, so the new members of the Club had helpful connections.

There is some dispute as to where the first bowls green was located. It was rented from Mr F Clarke of Dane John Works for the sum of £10 per annum with £1 payable for upkeep. In 1898 the members decided to hire a green-keeper and Mr Butcher of Nunnery Fields took on the role for 5 shillings a week. The first match was against the The Ship Bowling Club from Faversham and Canterbury won by 73 points to 64.

The Club expanded quite rapidly and at an AGM (and dinner) held in November 1900 at the Saracen's Head in Burgate, it was resolved that the Club should move to a more appropriate location. It took almost two years for that to happen and Mr Belsey, a builder from Norman Road, leased a site on the Old Dover Road (located where the Police Station is today) to the Club for 21 years.

The end of the lease brought uncertainty as the tenure was only extended a year at a time, which was unsatisfactory. The hunt was on for a new location which the Club could own. Finances were not in a good state and several propositions were considered and rejected.

Eventually in 1929 the Club acquired a new site between Norman Road/Nunnery Road/Oxford Road (the Nunnery Road site) for the princely sum of £400 which meant, and for the first time, it was beholden to external financiers, the brewery of Messrs. George Beer and Rigden. It proved to be a very good decision.

The new green, formed of Cumberland turf and costing £810, was set in splendid isolation reached only by footpath, surrounded by smallholdings and orchard land. The rural nature of the site was confirmed when it was reported that rhubarb emerged "here and there" on the expensive green.

The gentleman's game of bowls had been developing into the sport of lawn bowls and the first match played on the new green on 1 May 1930 was against the Kent County Bowling Association, of which the Club was one of the founder members. The Club had 53 bowling members and 53 social members.

The new green and clubhouse enabled a focus of excellence at this competitive sport and in 1932 the Club won the County Triples Championship, the first year it had been played.

The Club had its ups and downs over the 70 years of being at the Nunnery Road site, but surely one of the highlights had to be the belated admittance of ladies to the membership of the Club in 1966. In 1980 the unbadged foursome of Win Doubleday, Margaret Amos, Doreen Williams and Daphne Kennedy won the English National Fours title, a feat yet to be replicated subsequently by the men bowlers of Canterbury.

In 2001 the Club made its final move within OHSCA territory when it relocated to a several acre site on South Canterbury Road (almost next to Kent & Canterbury Hospital). It has two greens, extensive gardens, a fine clubhouse and a membership of over 200. It is, in the mind of the author of this piece, perhaps the finest location in Kent to play bowls.

The Club welcomes new members of any age or ability. It is truly a sport for all and a very social activity. More information can be found on the Club website at <https://canterburybowlingclub.com/>.

*John M. Andrews (CBC Webmaster)*

## SAINT MARTIN'S CHURCH

The small hillside church dedicated to St. Martin overlooks its two offspring in Canterbury, the cathedral and the ruins of St. Augustine's abbey, in the Stour Valley. It is generally accepted that St. Martin's was the first Christian church to be established in eastern Britain after this part of the former Roman province of Britannia was settled by Angles, Saxons, and Jutes in the early- to mid-fifth century.

The English historian Bede (ca 673–735), writing in the monastery at Jarrow in the Kingdom of Northumbria, believed that St. Martin's was a repurposed Roman Christian building. However, his similar belief that the cathedral was originally a Roman church is now known to be unfounded, and we do not currently know what purpose the original Roman building at St. Martin's—represented by the western half of the current chancel and largely constructed from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century reused Roman brick and local stone—may have served. It



may have been a mausoleum, but this appears unlikely as there are no other late Roman burials between St. Martin's and the nearby road which connected Canterbury with the official entry point into Britannia, at Richborough. It may have been part of a domestic structure (we know that a 'mosaic' pavement was discovered several centuries ago on St. Martin's Hill). It also remains entirely possible that the church was simply constructed from reused Roman material around AD 580, well after the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Kent was established, though certain features of the building support an earlier date.

These features including the likely plan of the original building (though this is not diagnostic and the western extent is also not known and the building may or may not have ended in an apse at the east end), the presence to the south of the chancel of a niche or small room with a 20 cm thick Roman concrete floor, and the building's proximity to a spring, suggest that this was a Roman temple, possibly to a water deity.

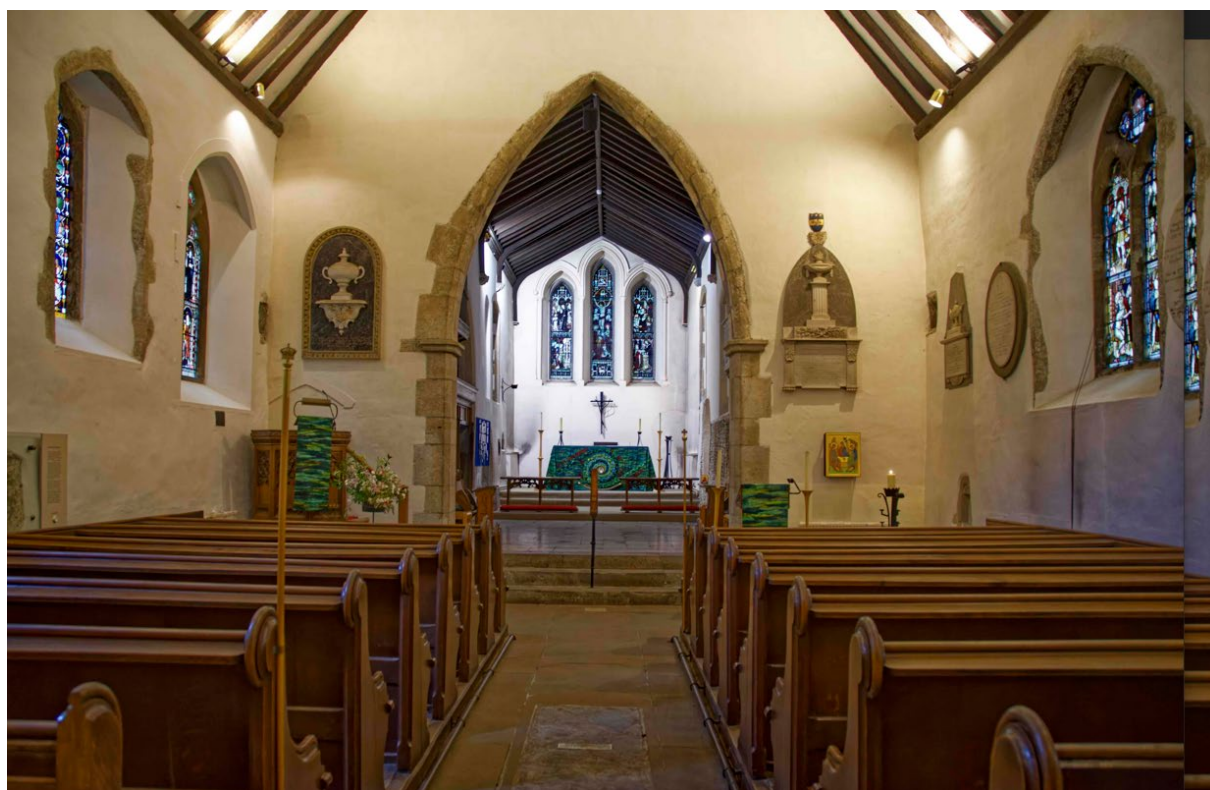
Regardless of the building's origins, we are on firmer ground in believing that a chapel was established here for the Merovingian Frankish princess, Bertha (ca 565–601) and her accompanying Frankish bishop, Liudhard (died ca 600), after she married Aethelberht (ca 550–616) the pagan king of Kent.



That Augustine—with instructions from Pope Gregory I to found churches at London and York—arrived and stayed in Canterbury was, consequently, not an accident. He was well aware that there was a Christian queen, bishop, and royal chapel in the vicinity of the former Roman town. (The idea that Aethelberht had a 'palace' within the walls of Canterbury is unlikely given that the early Anglo-Saxon kings were itinerant—moving from hall to hall. The Anglo-Saxons also had a particular aversion to the ruined Roman towns, though they seem to have courted the prestige of living in the vicinity of them.)

St. Martin's church would have been the first place used for worship by Augustine before building began at Christ Church (the cathedral) and SS. Peter and Paul (St. Augustine's). Augustine had the better part of forty monks and a number of Frankish interpreters with him. If we then add the queen and her retinue, together with the Christian converts made at court by Liudhard, it is not difficult to assume that the current nave was added a short time after Augustine's arrival.

Indeed, these walls may be the first stone walls built in Anglo-Saxon England. 'Anglo-Saxon' windows can still be seen in outline on the west wall from which the plaster was removed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These original windows were later enlarged before being replaced by a larger central window, which was itself blocked off when the bell tower was added in the late 14<sup>th</sup> /early 15<sup>th</sup> century.



At the other end of the church, the east wall of the Anglo-Saxon church was destroyed by a 12<sup>th</sup> century extension which includes an impressive *sedile* in which priests would have sat. A fine Early Norman *piscina* for the washing of the chalice was probably moved from nearby, and can now be seen in the south-east corner of the nave.

The current east end, with its triple lancet window, is a Victorian rebuilding of the 13<sup>th</sup> century wall. As is often the case, the Victorians were guilty of some significant tampering with the church fabric without writing down what they had done. A major renovation of the church was conducted in 1844–45 and much of the flint facing of the church was added then, together with a new roof over the chancel.

There is much more to be seen in this remarkable structure than can be covered here, but St. Martin's Church in North Holmes Road is open to visitors on Wednesday to Sunday inclusive, from 11 am to 3 pm.

Text and photographs by Nigel Fletcher-Jones ©

## LOCAL CHARITY: FRIENDS OF WESTGATE PARKS

*In an attempt to keep the recent series of articles by Members about local charities that they support (so far we have had accounts of Bright Shadow from Alison Culverwell, and Connecting Canterbury from David Hartwell), without anything submitted this time round from the membership at large, I decided to include something about Friends of Westgate Parks – which I have been involved with since the group's inception, initially at the behest of Canterbury City Council, in 2011. In the coming months 'FoWP' will be supporting the annual Medieval Pageant (6<sup>th</sup> July), Canterbury City Show (20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> July) and the Riverfest (celebrating the Great Stour: 14<sup>th</sup>– 22<sup>nd</sup> September).*

Westgate Parks, formally established in 2012, bring together four areas of land in Canterbury that lie beside the Great Stour – public open spaces with very different histories and functions, but now inter-connected.



Furthest from Westgate Towers is Bingley Island, part of Whitehall Meadows local nature reserve. Opposite is Toddlers Cove. In 1876 this became the site of an open air swimming pool that only closed in the 1970s. Thanks to Heritage Lottery funding, Toddlers Cove is now Canterbury's most popular adventure playground. Tannery Field, with its trees and meadows, lies next to Rheims Way. Steve Portchmouth's iconic iron bull (look for the YouTube video) marks the Field's former connection with St Mildred's Tannery, founded in the 1790s.

The fourth and perhaps best known element of the Parks is Westgate Gardens. This lovely ornamental park and arboretum formerly belonged to Tower House. Home to the locally important Williamson family, in 1936 Stephen and Catherine Williamson gave Tower House, its gardens, and Tannery Field to the City. The Gardens are steeped in history.

Beneath the lawns lie foundations of a major section of the Romano-British city wall, and the point where Watling Street crossed the river. The Oriental Plane tree close to Tower House, with its massive and distinctive trunk, is well over 200 years old – and now one of 70 ancient trees dedicated to Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as part of the Platinum Jubilee 'Queen's Green Canopy' memorial. In contrast, the Physic Garden was only created in 2015, during the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' project (2013–2018).



Westgate Parks is owned by Canterbury City Council, which manages and maintains it in partnership with the Friends of Westgate Parks – a registered charity. This partnership is based on a Memorandum of Understanding, most recently updated in March 2023. The shared objectives include education and research on the biodiversity and archaeology of the parks, and their protection, conservation and improvement.

Current projects include renewal of the information board in Westgate Gardens about the lost third century city wall and London Gate on Watling Street (see p. 14) and associated way-finding plaque (generously supported by the Martello Fund), replanting and maintenance of the Physic Garden, research about the flowers and pollinators on Tannery Field wildflower meadows, enlarging the pond on Bingley Island, and an extended tree trail. Results from research on wildlife carried out by the Friends and associates can be found on our website: <https://www.westgateparks.co.uk/>


Currently the Friends need volunteers to help maintain the Physic Garden, assist with collecting litter, and work on our website. We also need new trustees – and funds. Email Michael at [friendsofwestgateparks@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofwestgateparks@gmail.com) to find out more – and if you wish, perhaps be added to our email circulation list. To make a cash donation, please use bank transfer (Friends of Westgate Parks, sort code 60-04-27, account number 98929437), or send a cheque made payable to Friends of Westgate Parks to: Hon. Treasurer, 26 New Street, St Dunstan's, Canterbury CT2 8AU.

Thank you.

Bingley Island, May 2023





Final proof of the new London Gate information board, now installed at the original site in what is now Westgate Gardens



## London Gate

and original city walls

AN HISTORICAL MAP OF  
**CANTERBURY**  
With Roman Roads to 1987



**The two stones in the grass mark the position of Roman London Gate, one of the main gates in the original town walls of Canterbury, built over 1700 years ago.**

*'Britannia' became a province of the Roman Empire in AD 43. However, Canterbury's walls were not created until AD 270—290. By this time, the Romano-British town of Durovernum Cantiacorum had reached its zenith. Perhaps it was the citizens who built the defences. On the other hand, this may have been ordered by the renegade Roman general Carausius, who tried to make Britannia his own personal empire at around this time.*

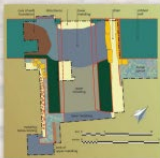
Up to 6 metres high, with an inner rampart, a series of defensive towers, and a massive outer ditch, the walls enclosed the town centre on the east side of the river valley and changed the shape of the town, cutting off the St Dunstan's area in the process.

The road from Dover entered the town on its south-east side via Riding Gate, a monumental structure with guard chambers. London Gate was a smaller, single lane portal on the north-west side, built over part of the earlier dual carriage way.


The road crossed the river behind you — on the far side, its exact location is marked in the path.

Nothing can be seen of the defences in this part of the town today, but the foundations remain beneath your feet. The much later medieval wall, largely built on the Roman period footings, survived into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

**A reconstruction of roads (violet lines) and other features in Romano-British Canterbury (Latin: Durovernum Cantiacorum) before the walls were built.** Wauling Street, shown coming from Dover (Dubris), runs diagonally from lower right to upper left, towards London (Londinium). It crossed the river just behind where you are standing (box with dashed lines; blue arrow).



**Archaeological plan of London Gate**  
The plan shows how archaeologists in 1955 uncovered the remains of the lost wall, along with the gate, and the road passing through it. Two levels of road surfacing (installing) were discovered, as well as the previous, wider surface (implying below footing) that the gate was built over, reducing the width of Wauling Street. This later, narrower road was also seen in the 2016 community dig, on the other side of the river. Visit the friends of westgate parks website for further explanation and key to the plan.




**A view from within**  
An artist's impression of the centre of Canterbury, at about 300 AD, looking north-east. Beyond the imposing, semi-circular theatre lies the arena, within the original walls, where Canterbury Cathedral was founded 300 years later. London Gate was located to the left, and is not shown in this reconstruction.


**Canterbury's original city walls were built during the period 270-290 AD.** In this version of the re-construction, the wall is indicated by the red line. The locations of the various main gates are indicated by red rectangles, and other entrances by red squares. From Dover, Wauling Street entered the walled town through Ridinggate (where buses now enter the bus station; blue arrow), and exited toward London through London Gate.

**Want to know more?**  
Look out for the Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Historic Towns Trust Historical Map of Canterbury from Roman Times to 1907 in local bookshops and online.


**Finds from St Dunstan's**




In the early 5th century, someone buried these silver items just outside the wall, including ingots and interesting spoons, some with Christian monograms. The hoard, found in 1962 when Rheims Way bridge was built over the river, is now in Canterbury's Roman Museum.



Romano-British foggans like these were made at Canterbury in the first to third centuries AD, and perhaps on the valley side of St Dunstan's, where several kilns have been located. Whole pots like these are usually found in burials of the period.




This pipe-clay figurine, which archaeologists call a 'pseudo-Venus', was found in 2001 in a second-century cremation burial (along with a faggion) in a large, early Romano-British cemetery next to London Road. The figurine had been symbolically broken during the funerary ritual, with the head placed one side of the cremated remains, and the body on the other. The feet were never found.




Visit [www.westgateparks.co.uk](http://www.westgateparks.co.uk) for further information, or contact [friendsofwestgateparks@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofwestgateparks@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer.

**Friends of Westgate Parks**



Canterbury Archaeological Trust



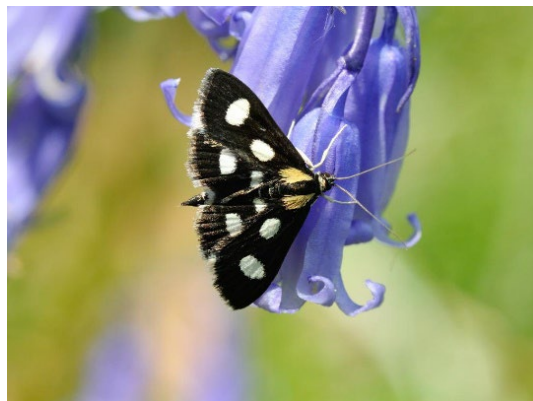
canterbury city council

Dick Vane-Wright, Trustee of Friends of Westgate Parks, June 2024

## BLUEBELLS

If my memory serves, the idea of an annual OHSCA bluebell walk is a carryover from SCRA – initiated, I believe, by Tim Carlyle. There is little doubt in my opinion that the best place locally to see that breathtaking expanse of blue under green is the so-called ‘Bluebell Forest’ at King’s Wood (<https://www.forestryengland.uk/kings-wood>), about 2 miles south-west of Chilham. We had a wonderful OHSCA walk there in May 2018 (<https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/OHSCA-Newsletter-7-2018-Summer.pdf>). However, like many of the best bluebell woods, parking for King’s is quite difficult for more than one or two cars, and some slopes on the way up can be very slippery. Covid and wet weather have frustrated our recent attempts to reprise King’s Wood at bluebell time, notably last year.

Mindful of the very wet spring this year, and based on what turned out to be faulty information, initially we advertised Clowes Wood for this year’s walk. Clowes, part of the Blean complex, is wonderful, with good parking and mostly level, wide tracks. It also has the White-spotted Sable moth (<https://butterfly-conservation.org/news-and-blog/landmark-discovery-in-kent-gives-hope-for-rare-moth-population>).



White-spotted Sable – resting on a bluebell! (© Bob Eade)

However, unless we missed something, prospecting the site a couple of weeks before the event, Hazel and I could find no more than a few stunted bluebells, here and there. No great swathes of blue – not a ‘bluebell wood’ – so we hurriedly switched to another old favourite, Whitehill Wood, Lower Hardres – which we last visited only two years ago: (<https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/OHSCA-Newsletter-23-2022-Summer.pdf>).

Thus it was that just six of us (and one dog) met near Lower Hardres farm shop at 10.30 am, Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April. If you recall we were still in that period of what seemed like perpetual rain – in the event we were lucky, arriving after the early morning drizzle stopped, and completing our walk (some of us then taking an excellent lunch at *The Granville*) before the rain returned again later in the afternoon. This year we took a different route, starting out along the south-eastern flank of the wood before circling round and back by a more familiar path. It was just as well we did – numerous swathes of our blue quarry delighted us on the outward section – only to find that the bluebells on the return path, which had been so wonderful in 2022, were less spectacular this year.

Such bluebell woods as King’s and Whitehill are one of the delights of the English countryside in spring. But the difference at Whitehill after only two years gave me pause for thought – how much did I know about bluebells? – on reflection, almost nothing! So I did a little ‘research’ – and was quite surprised to discover even some cultural as well as botanical ‘facts’:

- The currently accepted scientific name of our native bluebell is *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*. The specific name *non-scripta* was first proposed by Linnaeus in 1753, in his celebrated work *Species Plantarum*, as a species of *Hyacinthus*. *Non-scripta* means unmarked or unlettered – Linnaeus chose to distinguish it thus from the Hyacinth of Greek mythology (υάκινθος) – a fabulous flower that sprang up from the blood of the dying Prince Hyacinthus. His lover Apollo, on witnessing Hyacinthus’s demise, cried out in grief, his tears marking the petals with the word ‘alas’ (‘Ai, Ai’; Αλίμονο).
- The generic assignment of *non-scripta* has changed several times in the past 271 years, but current use of *Hyacinthoides*, although the name was first coined in 1759, only dates back to 1944. (In many older publications, and even some websites, it is called *Endymion non-scriptus*.)
- *Hyacinthoides* is not a sort of lily, as once was thought, but a member of the plant family Asparagaceae – a natural group of about 3000 species divided among about 115 genera – including *Asparagus*. Although within the family, the bluebell is not closely related to *Asparagus* itself, I have to confess I was quite unaware of this ‘genealogical’ (phylogenetic) connection.



- The bluebell genus, although now widely introduced around the world, was originally exclusive to western Europe and parts of North Africa, with many of the eleven recognised species being restricted to the Mediterranean basin.
- In the UK, in addition to our native *H. non-scripta*, the Iberian origin *H. hispanica* has been introduced commercially – and this is the bluebell that we now found in so many private gardens and parks. Unfortunately, the two species are thought to have separated only a few thousand years ago – and they hybridise freely, the invasive hybrids apparently threatening our well-adapted native species. Quite apart from the botanical issues, the two parental species are, despite their supposed brief time of separation, surprisingly different. The flower spike of *H. hispanica* is upright, and does not ‘nod’ in the wind like the delicately curved *non-scripta*. Its pollen is blue, not white. The flowers are a paler, less intense blue, and have a less powerful scent. There are other differences. It seems that when it comes to bluebells, aesthetically at least, natives are best!



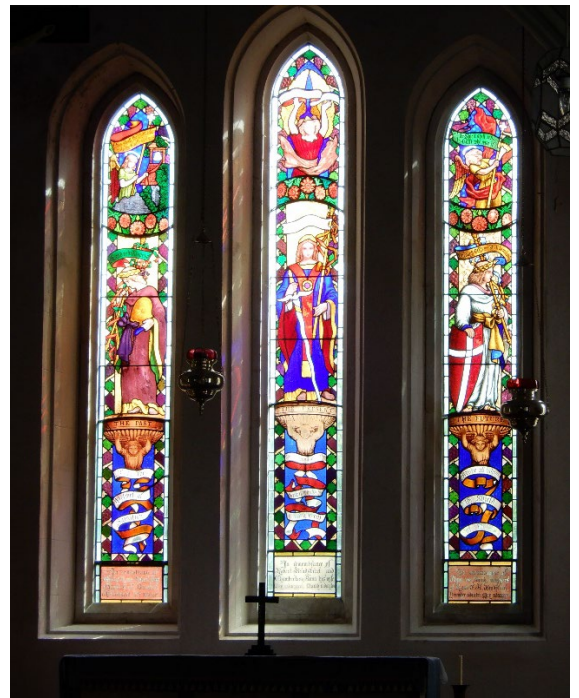
<https://www.japaneseknotweedkillers.com/spanish-bluebell> © [left: Spanish bluebell]

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bluebells\\_in\\_Narrow\\_Wood,\\_Wadborough\\_-\\_geograph.org.uk\\_-\\_781186.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bluebells_in_Narrow_Wood,_Wadborough_-_geograph.org.uk_-_781186.jpg) © [right: English]

- We inherited *H. hispanica* in our Cromwell Road garden – and on occasions we have tried to eliminate it by digging up the bulbs – with very limited or even no success. Now I find a potential explanation for this – the roots of *Hyacinthoides* are contractile – so that in deep soils such as gardens, each year the roots pull the bulbs deeper and deeper into the ground. This protects them from frost, excessive heat and increases their access to water. Even if you manage to dig up many bulbs, it is very difficult to eliminate all of them, particularly of course those deepest in the soil. So they soon recover in subsequent years.

*Dick Vane-Wright, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024*

On the following page are a few photographs from ‘Whitehill bluebells 2024’ – including stained glass in St Mary’s Church, Lower Hardres, which we included on a very enjoyable even if rather muddy walk!



## TALKS

### Stephen Scoffham

The fourteenth of our OHSCA Literary Events will be on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, with a talk by environmentalist Stephen Scoffham, entitled *There is no Planet B*, followed by questions and discussion. Stephen's CV and abstract can be found in the digital edition of our Spring 2024 newsletter (no. 30, page 16; <https://www.ohsca.org/pdfs/OHSCA-Newsletter-30-2024-Spring.pdf>).



- Date: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024
- Time: Doors & Bar open at 6.30 pm; Talk starts at 7 pm followed by discussion, and will finish at 8.45 pm; Bar 6.30–8:45 pm.
- Payment for drinks by card only. Entry: cash at the door (see below).
- Place: Kent & Canterbury Club, The Elms, 17 Old Dover Road, CT1 3JB. Free parking available at the rear of the building.
- Booking: Places are limited; open to all OHSCA members and their guests on a first come first served basis who book via [social@ohsca.org](mailto:social@ohsca.org). Please book as early as possible so that we can ensure the event is viable and preferably at the latest by Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September. Please let us know if you are unable to access the stairs so we can make appropriate arrangements, as otherwise we will be in the upstairs room.
- Payment: £5.00 per head (to cover room hire costs), payable in cash on the door.

If you book but later find you are unable to attend, please contact [social@ohsca.org](mailto:social@ohsca.org) or 01227 456623 to cancel.

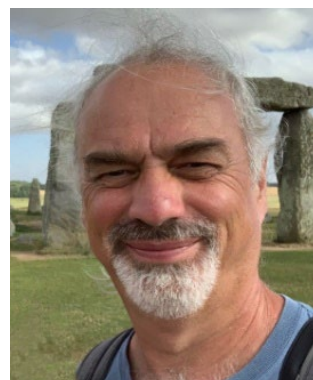
### Phil Perkins

On Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024 we will have a talk by OHSCA member, avid gardener, and OU archaeologist Phil Perkins, on *Giving the Etruscan gods their due: discoveries at the 2500 year-old temple at Poggio Colla in Tuscany* – to be followed, as usual, by questions and discussion.

- Arrangements, including booking and payment, will be the same as for Stephen's talk (above).

Phil's professional biography can be found here:

<https://fass.open.ac.uk/people/pep3>



This little cameo can also be found on the internet, as part of a fascinating interview:

*Phil Perkins is Professor of Archaeology at the Open University. His research focusses on Etruscan archaeology and he is currently writing up the results of excavations and artefact studies at the Etruscan sanctuary of Poggio Colla and the sacred lake at Albagino, both to the north of Florence in Tuscany. In 2016-17 he was a Hugh Last Fellow at the British School at Rome. His teaching at the Open University has ranged from Homer to 19<sup>th</sup> century netsuke.*

<https://classicalstudies.support/2020/06/04/comfort-classics-phil-perkins/>

### Martin Latham and the Spring Party – brief report

The Spring Party took place on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 6.30 pm at the Kent & Canterbury Club with a talk by Martin Latham, Manager at Waterstones, about his book *The Bookseller's Tale*, followed by a buffet meal. Members clearly enjoyed Martin's talk and we are delighted that he has promised to give another talk in the future. The home cooked buffet was very good value. It was a pity that so few members attended as they missed a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

*Lorna Durrani*

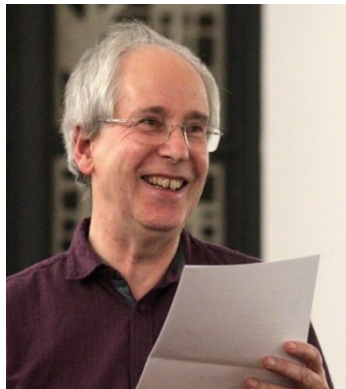
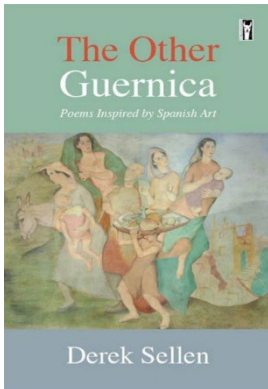
## POETS' CORNER

*The thirteenth of our OHSCA Literary Events took place on 4<sup>th</sup> June – a new, experimental, and as it turned out, hugely enjoyable Poetry Evening. Here is Lorna Durrani's write up:*

### Poetry Evening, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024

This was a new enterprise by OHSCA – to invite a selection of established and new poets to take part in a workshop. It turned out to be a great success and the diversity and uniqueness of each poet's contribution was enjoyed by all.

We began with a presentation by **DEREK SELLEN** who illustrated his poems by the paintings that had inspired them. We learnt that this genre of poetry is known as Ekphrastic poetry which draws inspiration from visual art. Ekphrastic poems have been created for centuries finding new aspects and meanings in famous paintings.



**Derek Sellen** has been writing poetry, stories and plays over many years. He has read his work widely, in the UK, Italy, Germany, Russia (in better times) and Ireland and has won various poetry awards, including Poets Meet Politics and Poets Meet Painters. He has won the O'Beal Five Words three times, and twice won the Canterbury Festival Poet of the Year international competition. His poems have been placed or highly commended in the Plough Poetry Competition, Richmond Arts, Sentinel, and many other competitions. His collection of poems inspired by Spanish art *The Other Guernica* (Cultured Llama 2018) was a finalist in the Poetry Book Award 2020 and was very positively reviewed in Poetry Salzburg, London Grip, and other places.

His first collection was *The Arch and its Shadow* (2009). His work has been widely published in anthologies, online, and in magazines.



Derek's presentation was followed by a very different presentation from **KEITH OLIVER** who gave a very moving account of his discovery of poetry as a way of expressing his emotional journey since he was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer's disease. Keith talked about how he discovered a creative side in his journey, painting and writing poetry, to complement the many talks he gives at conferences on dementia. He illustrated this by talking about the Kitwood blue flower pin adopted by the Alzheimer's Society, as a symbol for anyone who wants to raise awareness of dementia and support people affected by the condition. The flower is a forget-me-not, a small blue flower that represents remembrance and has been associated with dementia. People with dementia may experience memory loss, among other symptoms. This makes the forget-me-not the perfect flower to represent the

cause of people with dementia.

**Keith Oliver** was 55 and the head-teacher of a large primary school when he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Now in his 60s, Keith's life has seen many changes, but he refuses to be defined by the condition. Although retired from teaching, he continues to stay busy through volunteering work and as an activist championing the voices of people living with dementia. Keith's first book *Walk the Walk, Talk the Talk* (published in 2016 by Forget-Me-Nots, Canterbury) was written after he was told in 2010 by a doctor that he had Alzheimer's, and tells the story of Keith's life, before, during and since receiving his diagnosis. Keith's second book *Dear Alzheimer's: A Diary of Living with Dementia* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, April 2019) gives a moving account of his journey to live a full life after diagnosis. Each chapter concludes with a brief letter addressed 'Dear Alzheimer's', based on notes taken from Keith's diaries and journals. Keith's new book *Talking with Dementia Reconsidered* was published by OUP on 30 April 2024. Keith co-led a national poetry project for people with dementia in 2020–21 which resulted in the publication of an anthology – *Time and Place* (available on Amazon). He was the first person in the world with dementia to address the United Nations CRPD in Geneva which resulted in the UK government making improvements in the provision of care and support for people with a dementia diagnosis. Keith has discovered a creative side in his journey, painting and writing poetry, to complement the many talks he gives at conferences on dementia.

Keith was followed by **MARY ANNE SMITH SELLEN** who is both a poet and painter. Mary Anne talked about how her work is influenced by the nature around her. Currently she is working on poems based around memories and photographs from her 1960s childhood. Her reading of her own poems demonstrated the musicality of poetry and was very beautiful to listen to.



**Mary Anne Smith Sellen** is a poet and painter from Canterbury in Kent. Her work has been recognized in many competitions, including 1st Sentinel Literary Quarterly November 2017, 1st O Bheal Five Words Competition 2019, and 2nd 2024. She has been widely published both in print and online, including Sentinel Literary Quarterly, Grey Hen Press, Confluence, Dream Catcher, Beautiful Dragons, Wildfire Words and Linen Press. Her first full poetry collection, *The Shape of our Lives*, was long-listed in the 2023 Indigo Dreams First Collection competition. In her poetry she particularly enjoys writing about the lives of artists and writers, and responding to works of art. She is currently working on poems for a new pamphlet, this time themed around memories and photographs from her 1960s childhood. Mary Anne is

a regular reader at events and festivals.

After a short break we were challenged by a very different presentation from **TIM ARMSTRONG**. Tim's biography should have warned us to expect something different from the other poets as he has a passion for dada and surrealism. We were invited to participate in his performances and after some initial hesitation members joined in enthusiastically. Tim demonstrated the diversity and variety of genres of poetry, much as in art we are challenged by performance art today.

**Tim Armstrong** is the prizewinning author of *Walter and the Resurrection of G* and *Cecilia's Vision* (based in medieval Canterbury); he also plays and sings with the local Kamikaze Reunion Blues Band; he has worked as a translator of books on philosophy and archaeology, and he was the Head of Languages at the King's School, Canterbury. He regularly performs his poetry locally, driven by a passion for dada and surrealism.



We ended by **GRETA ROSS** talking about her own poetry, having acted as compère for the evening. Greta talked about how many of her poems are a response to the natural world, and the effect of social problems and world events on people's lives. One of her poems expressed her grief following the death of her parents.



Born in Sydney, Australia, **Greta Ross** graduated in Medicine, and then spent 40 years in general practice and as a community health doctor in Manchester and Lincolnshire, and then as international consultant in health projects in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Greta gained an MA (Distinction) in Writing Poetry from the University of Newcastle and Poetry School, London, in 2022. Her poetry collection, *Facts of Life*, was published in 2008, and her poems have appeared in over 30 poetry magazines and anthologies. One of her poems, *Leavings*, reflecting her grief following the death of her parents and her experiences supporting carers in her work, featured in an anthology called *This Was Not in the Plan*, (2017). Greta won the 2022 Canterbury Festival Poet of the Year competition for her poem, *Ivan makes a violin for his son*, awarded on National Poetry Day in October 2022. She held the Poet of the Year title for 2023, and she acted as one of the three judges for the 2023 Festival competition. Greta enjoys exploring different poetic forms and has won first prize in several international competitions and been commended in others.

Many of her poems are a response to the natural world, and the effect of social problems and world events on people's lives.

Having five poets share the evening workshop meant that each poet was only able to give us a brief insight into their work and the inspiration for their poems. However, what it did do very successfully was to demonstrate the diversity and uniqueness of each poet's work and how successfully poetry can express strong emotions, such as grief (Greta Ross) and loss (Keith Oliver).

We look forward to the follow-up poetry event in December. Again, this will be a combination of established poets and those poets newly discovering a passion for writing poetry. Come and support us! To end with the words of Robert Frost: *Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought, and the thought has found words.*

**Lorna Durrani, SEA Convenor**

## Poetry Evening, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024

*The sixteenth of our OHSCA Literary Events will be on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December, and follows on from the first poetry evening on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2024.*

The idea of arranging a poetry evening was generated by discovering a box of copies of *After Sunset*, a collection of poetry written by my late husband Osman Durrani, dedicated to our elder son Alexander, born in 1978. Previously we had only considered people using prose as a medium to express thought. The poets represented are a diverse group of established and published poets as well as casual poets and people taking up writing poetry in retirement.

*Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought, and the thought has found words.* Robert Frost

- Date: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024
- Time: Doors & Bar open at 6.30 pm; Poetry reading 6.45 pm followed by discussion. We will end by 9 pm. Bar 6.30–8.45 pm (*card payment only*).
- Place: Kent & Canterbury Club, The Elms, 17 Old Dover Road, CT1 3JB. Free parking available at the rear of the building.
- Booking: Places are limited; open to all OHSCA members and their guests on a first come first served basis who book via [social@ohsca.org](mailto:social@ohsca.org).
- Please book as early as possible so that we can ensure the event is viable and preferably at the latest by *Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2024*. Please let us know if you are unable to access the stairs so we can make the appropriate arrangements.
- Payment: £5.00 per head (to cover room hire costs), *payable in cash on the door*. If you book but later find you are unable to attend, please contact [social@ohsca.org](mailto:social@ohsca.org) or 01227 456623/07753514351.
- Each of the poets will introduce their work and read one or two poems (approximately 20 minutes each person). There will be a short comfort break after the first three presentations. This will be followed by a brief discussion.

*These are the five poets represented: Nancy Gaffield, Rob Veltman, Georgina Koubel, Osman Durrani, and David Broadbridge.*



**NANCY GAFFIELD** is an Emeritus Reader in Creative Writing at the University of Kent. Her first collection of poetry, *Tokaido Road* (CB editions 2011) was nominated for the Forward Best First Collection Prize and was awarded the Aldeburgh First Collection Prize that year. Her second collection, *Owhere* (Templar 2012) won a Templar Poetry Pamphlet Award that year. Other publications include *Continental Drift* (Shearsman 2014), *Zyxt* (Oystercatcher 2015), and a libretto *Tokaido Road: A Journey after Hiroshige* (Shearsman 2014), *Meridian* (Longbarrow 2019), and *Wealden* (Longbarrow 2021), a collaborative work of poems and music. Her poems have appeared in leading journals and anthologies including *The Forward Anthology*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Tears in the Fence*, *The Long Poem Magazine* and the *Golden Handcuffs Review*. She regularly gives workshops, lectures, and readings, including festival appearances such as the Aldeburgh and Ledbury Poetry Festivals, the Sounds New Poetry Festival, the Wise Words Festival, the Canterbury Festival, and the London Poetry Series X-ing the Line.

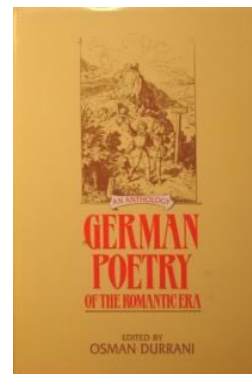
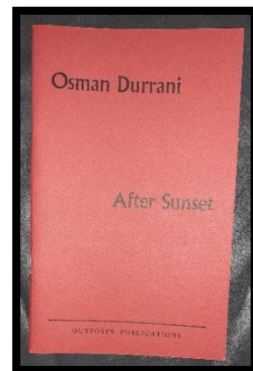
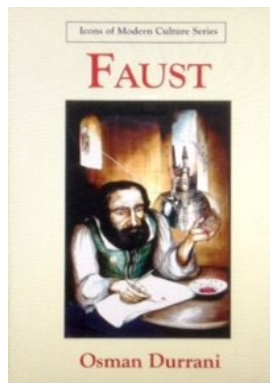
**ROBERT VELTMAN** was born in Hertfordshire instead of London, owing to the war, and was later evacuated to Huddersfield with his mother. He grew up and was educated in Middlesex, a county he represented as a state grammar schoolboy in rugby. The main part of his career was in teaching, at schools and universities both in England and East Africa, specialising eventually in Linguistics. On retirement from education, he joined a team at the BBC on the 'Speakeasy' project, on completion of which he joined a team of legal caseworkers specialising in immigration and asylum, at the same time studying for a degree in law. After retirement from paid employment until Lockdown, he advised in a voluntary capacity at Citizens' Advice. As a member of Canterbury Ramblers, he has led walks in East Kent and worked voluntarily as a parish footpath warden and local footpath officer for eleven parishes south of Canterbury. He has been learning Welsh most recently. He has been a casual poet for much of his life. The title of the poem he will present is *Quake*.



**GEORGINA KOUBEL** writes:

"In terms of my literary history, I published a number of textbooks during my time working as a Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Canterbury Christ Church University. Following retirement, I attended a creative writing class in Deal where I became aware that several members, including myself, were also writing poems. I suggested setting up a separate cohort for poetry, and the Deal Poets Society was born. We agreed to meet monthly as a group to share our work and offer constructive feedback. Since then, we have published two anthologies, *Love, Life, Loss*, which came out just before Lockdown and, more recently, *Tides and Times*. We have been invited to appear at festivals, at Church and Arts events and to work with a local primary school. We have also set up a very popular regular Open Mic poetry night."

**OSMAN DURRANI**



I will read a poem from Osman's short collection of poetry, *After Sunset*. Osman was born in 1945, graduated with First Class Honours in German from Oxford University, where he also received his PhD in 1976. His publications include *Faust and the Bible* (1977); *After Sunset* (1978); *German Poetry of the Romantic Era. An Anthology* (1986); and *Faust: Icon of Modern Culture* (2004), in which Derek Sellen contributed a short story *Faustus and the Potters*. He was one of eight poets who contributed poems in German and English to *Perspectives*, to accompany paintings by Achim Kiel. He was a Lecturer in German at the University of Durham and Professor of German at the University of Kent. Osman died in May 2023. A copy of *After Sunset* will be available free of charge.



**DAVID BROADBRIDGE** is a poet and translator. On leaving Oxford University, he worked in education in Denmark and England. His first collection, *'Something in Writing'* (Oversteps 2017), was followed by *'Nativitas'* (Encore Publications 2022) with music by Philip Moore, and he has recently published a pamphlet *The Wound Dresser* (Randolph Press 2024). A number of his poems have been set to music and widely performed. *Adam's Fall*, with music by the Welsh composer Richard Elfyn Jones, was performed by the choir of King's College Cambridge at the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Christmas Eve 2017. It was subsequently recorded by the choir on a CD to celebrate 100 years of a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols.

*Treading the Dance*, a translation of Medieval Danish Ballads (Stacey 2011), was long-listed for the Popescu Prize and described by Seamus Heaney as 'beautifully produced and seriously enjoyable.' *Butterfly Valley*, his translation of Inger Christensen's sonnet sequence, was published in *Modern Poetry in Translation* in 2021. He has also translated a sequence of Dutch poems based on Rembrandt's paintings in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

## Some reflections to spark thought and discussion: what is poetry?

*Poetry is language on a spree.* John Hegley

*A poem should mean and not be.* Archibald MacLeish

*I started writing poetry because I didn't like poetry.* Benjamin Zephaniah

*Poetry is a hotline to the emotions.* Andrew Motion

*Poetry, like music is meant to be heard.* Basil Bunting

*Poetry is language in orbit.* Seamus Heaney

*Poetry is words with a tune.* Jon Stallworthy

*Poetry begins with delight and ends in wisdom.* Robert Frost

*Prose: Words in their best order. Poetry: The best words in the best order.* Samuel Taylor Coleridge

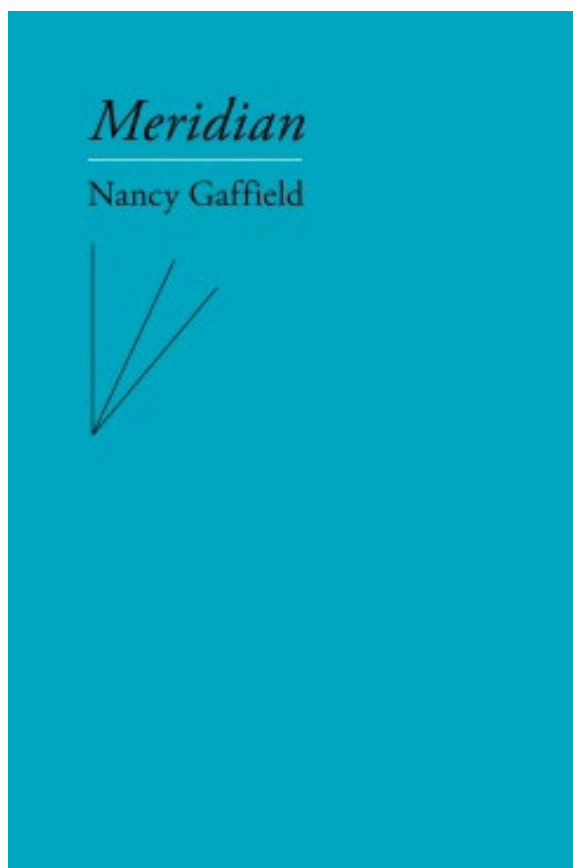
*Poetry is naked words dancing together.* Adrian Mitchell

*Poetry is like a multi-coloured marquee that has room for all kinds of forms and voices.* Vicki Feaver

*Every poem is an island. To get to a poem requires sailing out from the mainland of routine language.*  
Robert Crawford

(Taken from Facebook, Poetry Lovers, 11 December 2023)

*Lorna Durrani, OHSCA SEA Convenor*







## LOCAL PLAN – LATEST

From Victoria Asimaki, Canterbury City Council:

Dear all,

Our 12-week consultation on the latest draft of the Local Plan, under what is known as Regulation 18, closed on Monday 3 June. Many thanks to those of you that took the time to give us your views, we have now started the process of analysing all the comments we've received. We've recently published an update on our website which outlines what happens next and when. You can find this here:

<https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/news/the-local-plan-what-happens-next/>

Below is an indicative summary of the timetable:

Stage in the Local Plan process	Timetable
Regulation 18 consultation closes	3 June 2024
Analysis and consideration of consultation feedback, changes to the draft plan considered by the cross-party councillor working group	June 2024 to December 2024
Canterbury City Council's Cabinet and then Full Council to consider approval of revised draft plan for Regulation 19 consultation and submission to planning inspector	Expected January 2025
Regulation 19 consultation (six weeks)	Expected February/March 2025
Submission to Planning Inspectorate	Expected by 30 June 2025
Examination in Public	Expected to begin Autumn 2025

Kind regards,

Victoria Asimaki

Principal Policy Officer (Engagement)



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