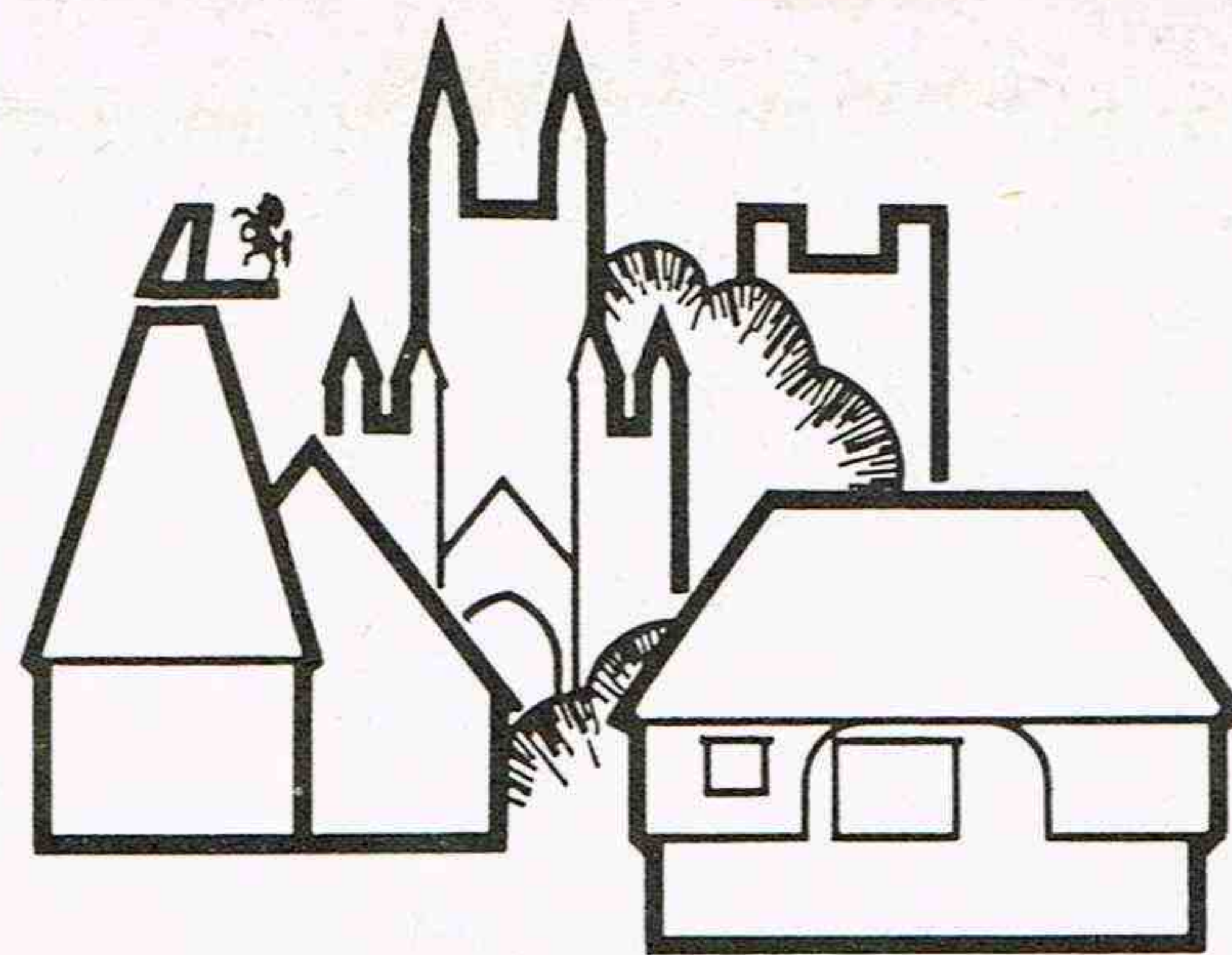


# Kent Conservation Bulletin

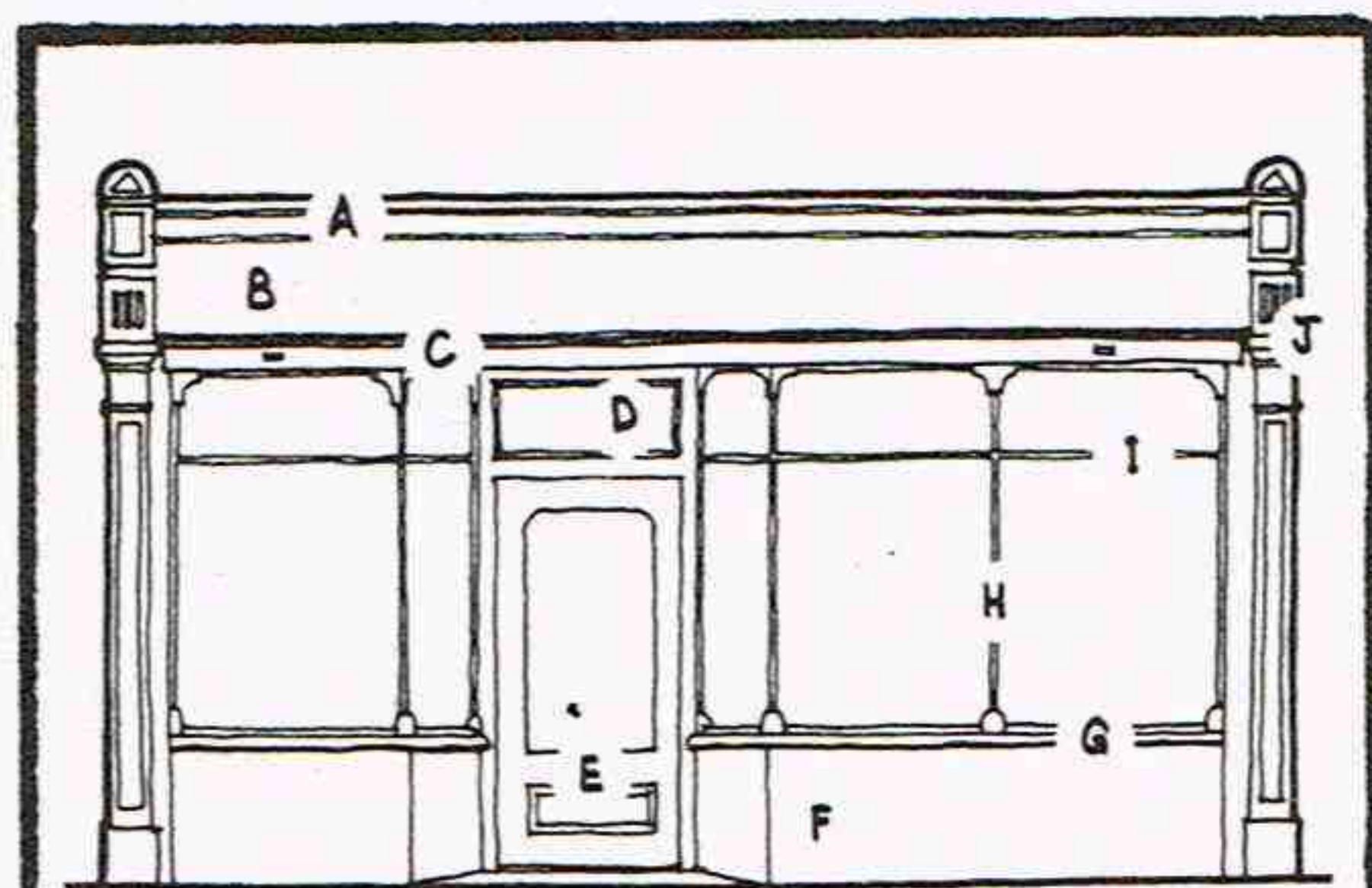
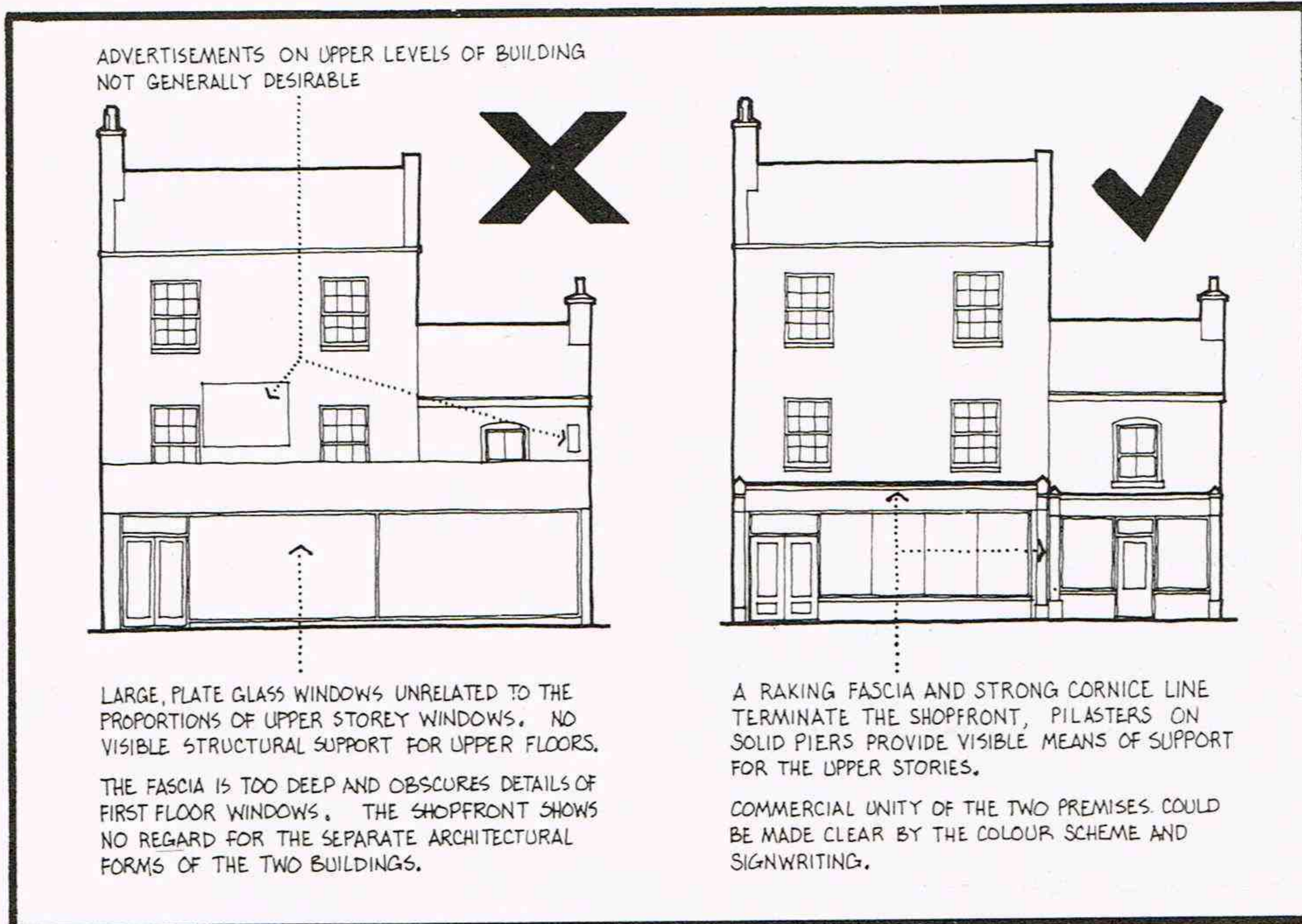
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## Shopfronts (2)

In the first article (Bulletin No. 82/1, April 1982) we described briefly the historical development of the shopfront to the present day and expressed concern that the installation of modern shopfronts often pays little regard to the design of the rest of the building and the character of the surrounding area.

Traditionally, shopfronts provided a lively and interesting street scene. They were often exuberantly detailed, representing the competitive nature of the commercial world and the promise of quality in product and service. The modern trader rarely sees things in the same way. His main aim is to obtain maximum window display area together with speed of installation. In the contemporary town centre business premises change hands frequently and each occupant seeks to establish his 'image' by modifying the shopfront and fascia - each time stripping away elements of the original architectural details.



### ELEMENTS OF A TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONT

A CORNICE	F STALLRISER
B FASCIA	G CILL
C BLIND BOX	H MULLION
D FANLIGHT	I TRANSOM
E PANELLED DOOR	J PILASTER & CORBEL

### So how do the planning authorities respond to this situation?

The Civic Amenities Act 1967 placed for the first time a duty on local planning authorities to preserve or enhance the character of 'Conservation Areas' which many of our town centres have since become. The Department of the Environment in Circular 23/77 issued guidance to local authorities on alterations to listed buildings, including shopfronts, pointing out that wherever examples of old shopfronts of merit survive every effort should be made to retain them. Some authorities have now carried out surveys to identify those shopfronts of individual or townscape merit which they would seek to retain and supported this with a policy for control of the design of new shopfronts where replacements in total or in part may be acceptable.

### What principles should therefore be applied to the design of new shopfronts?

The first and most important point is that the shopfront must be seen in the context of the design of the whole facade of the building. The fenestration of upper floors will influence the proportions and size of display windows. Large, plate-glass display windows without any visible means of support for the building above can have a very disturbing effect. The structure not only needs to be effective - it needs to be apparent.

Where a commercial premise occupies more than one building in a terrace or group the design of the shopfront should give expression to each individual unit. Fascias should be of appropriate depth and not obscure details of the facade above the shopfront. Generally a depth of around one-fifth of the total shopfront height is most suitable.

The traditional stall riser was at counter height (approx. 1 metre) and could be faced with a variety of materials - timber boarding or panelling, brickwork, render or tiling. Arguments are often advanced in support of lower stall risers in relation to the display of goods and merchandise in the windows. Gown shops, for example, will require sufficient height in order to properly display their merchandise so an exception should normally be made. An estate agent or building society office, on the other hand, would not have such a legitimate commercial argument. A minimum of 500 mm. should be maintained and it is worth remembering that the method of window display and its means of lighting can have greater impact and influence than merely the area of glass.

The materials and colours used should be visually compatible with the rest of the building and other good shopfront examples in the area. Wood is still the most suitable material for the frames and fascias of shopfronts to listed buildings and those in Conservation Areas. Where aluminium is acceptable, bronze anodised or matt black finishes are generally more distinctive and less garish than the more common satin anodised (light grey) finish.

Fascia signs and projecting signs also need careful consideration. In general terms the hand painted sign by a skilful signwriter is the most satisfying and the plastic, internally illuminated box sign the least so. Signs can be illuminated in a number of ways. *Indirectly* by spot lights shining on to the sign or by tubes set into the back of opaque 3-D letters to produce a halo effect. *Directly* by internally illuminated letters or by the internal illumination of the entire background of the sign. The indirect methods are generally the most satisfactory whereas the full internal illumination of a box sign is rarely appropriate. It would be more appropriate for illuminated signs to be restricted to those premises having a night time function, e.g. pubs, restaurants, hotels, cinemas, etc. and those permitted by law, e.g. chemists.

Clearly guidelines such as these can only provide a framework within which conservation objectives and commercial aspirations can be balanced; on the one hand the community interest - the wider aspects of the public realm of the street, and on the other, the needs of the individual trader to pursue his legitimate business interests.



## Canterbury Fish Market to be restored

A scheme for the restoration of the Canterbury Fish Market building in St. Margaret's Street, as illustrated here, has been approved by Canterbury City Council. Work is expected to commence later this year.

The building, which dates from the early 1820's, is a fine example of neo-classical architecture in the form of a Doric portico with four fluted columns - a style of architecture rare in Canterbury. Originally it was open at the front and separated from the street by iron railings between the columns.

At present the portico is grossly disfigured by the modern shopfronts, blinds and signs that have been added to the front over the years. The City Council, who own the site, have resolved to restore the original character of the building as much as possible by clearing away these later accretions and inserting new frameless plate glass shopfronts behind the Doric columns, protected at lower level by the reinstated iron railings. The work will also involve the cleaning and restoration of the stonework to the portico, the re-slating of the roof and the re-instatement within the pediment of the City Coat of Arms supported by Dolphins.

During preparations for the scheme two early illustrations of the Fish Market were studied to gain some idea of what it must once have looked like. Both illustrations were found to differ in detail from the building as constructed. One, believed to be the architect's original design for the front elevation of the building, with the date "1822" clearly inscribed on the frieze, belongs to the Royal Museum at the Beane Institute, Canterbury. The other, a perspective sketch of the Fish Market included in a ledger of City properties compiled in 1828-9, is kept in the Cathedral Library. This shows only two Doric columns, but the three existing fanhead windows at the back of the building are plainly seen. Curiously both illustrations show four laurel wreaths on the frieze instead of the existing ten triglyphs.

Historical continuity is maintained by the use of half the building as a wet fish shop. In fact it can be claimed that fish has been sold on this site for 500 years, for in the year 1480 a fish market was established by the City Fathers in Pikenot Alley - now Staines Place, to the rear of the market building - in order to give better facilities to the Whitstable fish-traders.



## KCC Grants

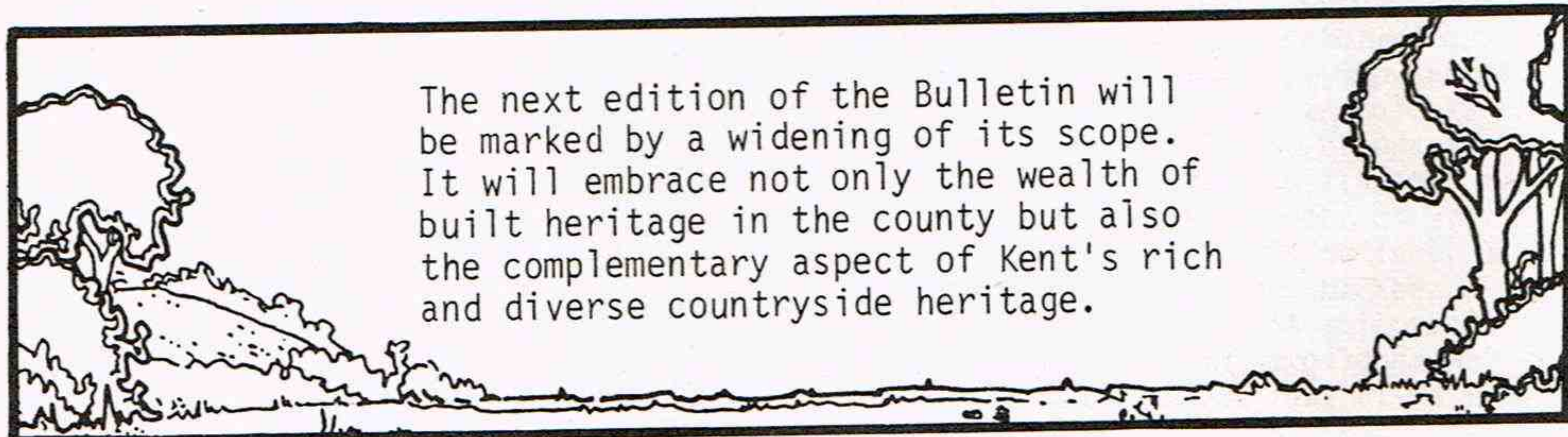
Nine grants, totalling £9,850, towards the cost of repairs to Buildings of County-wide Importance, were approved by the County Council's Amenities and Countryside Committee at their March meeting. These included six churches - £3,150 to Holy Trinity, Milton Regis, claimed to be the country's second oldest parish church still in use, although the present building is largely 14C; £1,000 each to St. John the Baptist, Penshurst, St. Catherine, Preston-next-Faversham and the Unitarian Church, Dover - an interesting example of a late Georgian non-conformist chapel; £800 to St. Michael, Sittingbourne and £200 to St. Martin, Great Mongeham. A grant of £2,000 was offered towards continuing repairs to Knole, Sevenoaks; £500 towards repairs to the early 19C. Evegate Watermill, picturesquely situated in the valley of the East Stour at Smeeth, with its external water-wheel in working order; £200 towards repairs to Willesley Hotel, Cranbrook, an 18C. house with alterations and sizeable additions by the distinguished Victorian architect, Richard Norman Shaw - his first important domestic commission.

ution towards the cost of repair to a Grade II listed wall on the west side of Wingham High Street. This 18C. red brick wall occupies a prominent position within the Conservation Area and encloses and defines this side of High Street at a point where there are no buildings. Two years ago the wall had deteriorated to such an extent that it had become potentially dangerous to the public and the top section was removed for safety.

A grant of £2,500 was made from the archaeology budget to the Fort Amherst and Lines Trust, which was formed to restore one of the most important Napoleonic fortresses in the country, covering some 14 acres of batteries, redoubts, bastions and tunnels on the Great Lines between Chatham and Gillingham. The Trust, which launched a national appeal at the end of January, is a voluntary body of local and national experts and is supported by many organisations.

## Barge Museum Exhibition

In celebration of Maritime England Year and the skill and achievement of Milton Creek shipwrights, the Dolphin Sailing Barge Museum Trust have prepared an exhibition detailing the barge building yards, and their locations, together with photographs of famous Milton built barges - with the general aim of reviving the memory of the days when the quiet crumbling quays and docks once resounded to the sound of adze and caulking mallet. The sturdy wooden hulls of over 500 sailing barges are known to have been launched into the waters of Milton Creek since the early 1800's. This narrow two mile tidal channel has probably produced a greater number of these craft than any other location on the East Coast. The exhibition can be seen on Sundays and Bank Holidays (11 a.m. - 5 p.m.) until mid-October, at the Dolphin Yard Museum, Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne.



The next edition of the Bulletin will be marked by a widening of its scope. It will embrace not only the wealth of built heritage in the county but also the complementary aspect of Kent's rich and diverse countryside heritage.

An Environmental Improvement grant of £345 was offered as a contrib-



## Archaeology

It can truly be said that whenever the ground surface in Canterbury is disturbed something interesting from its past comes to light. In March workmen digging foundations for the City Council's warden-assisted flats at Westgate Court Farm uncovered several giant pots of Roman origin. These were originally used in the 2C. A.D. as storage vessels for importing and exporting foods and liquids - later they were used as burial pots for cremated remains and interred in one of the great Roman cemeteries outside the city flanking London Road.

In April Segas workmen digging a trench along the main street in front of Eastbridge Hospital, for a new 12 in. gas main, unearthed part of the ancient King's Bridge. Ruts made by cart wheels could still be traced on some of the uncovered stones. The bridge was built on medieval foundations, rebuilt several times and widened 10 ft. in 1769 using stones from a demolished section of the City Wall between Pound Lane and St. Radigund's Street. Segas officials have now had to solve the problem of running their pipes over the River Stour without causing damage to the structure of the old bridge.

During May further remains of the first building on the site of the Poor Priests' Hospital in Stour Street were uncovered by Canterbury Archaeological Trust workers. While excavating in the 14C. hospital chapel, they found a 12C. undercroft six feet below present street level. This is believed to be part of the house known to have been built on the site in the 1180's by Lambin Frese, a wealthy Canterbury minter. The kitchens and main hall of the house have previously been uncovered on the site; the undercroft would probably have had a vaulted ceiling and private apartments above. At an earlier stage in their latest excavations here Trust workers found the original 13C. tiled floor of the chapel which was covered over when the hospital was rebuilt in 1373. This was so well preserved that it was possible to reconstruct a complete plan of the chapel and some of the tile designs.

FORTHCOMING ISSUES will cover: New Buildings in Conservation Areas; Town Schemes; Military Architecture; Planned Villages; Wind and Watermills; Victorian Buildings; Ancient Monuments; Seaside Architecture; Historic Landscapes; 1930's Architecture in Kent; Tree Planting Grants; Hedgerow Trees.

## Amenity Societies

### K.F.A.S. CONFERENCE

On 24 April the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies held its Annual General Meeting and Spring Conference at Margate in Northdown House, now restored and owned by Thanet District Council. The theme of the Conference was 'The Kent Coast: Defence, Past and Future'. There was an exhibition on the strategic Roman forts of Reculver and Richborough and their place in the history, not only of Kent, but of Britain.

Dr. Claire Lukehurst spoke on 'The Wantsum Marshes', once a channel between Thanet and the mainland. From the Middle Ages the land had been reclaimed by constructing 'droves' from thorn branches and mud - barriers against which the silt built up. These were still visible today, e.g. at Chislet and Gilling Drove.

There were talks by Mr. T. Clarke, Curator of the Essex and Colchester Museum and Mr. W. Burnett, Director of Tourism, S.E. England Tourist Board. The Margate Civic Society were hosts and had a display of fine photographs of Margate's historic buildings and the restoration of Northdown House. The Faversham Society provided a well-stocked bookstall.

## Mathematical Tiles

A symposium on the subject of mathematical tiles, or brick tiles, which was held at Ewell, Surrey, on 14 November, 1981, proved "a most enlightening experience", according to Alec Clifton-Taylor, who successfully chaired this gathering of enthusiasts from all over the country. From the 18 papers submitted, and with the help of slides, they learned about the variety of forms that these tiles could take, about the dating, which would seem to cover a period far longer than had formerly been supposed, and above all about their geographical distribution.

To the uninitiated, brick tiles are shaped in section to imitate the header or stretcher face of a brick and were mainly hung on laths nailed to a timber-framed wall. With their joints pointed in mortar they gave a convincing imitation of a brick wall. They were in use throughout much of the 18C and well into the 19C, principally on buildings of 'middle-class' status, but, contrary to popular belief, their invention and use had no connection with the brick and tile taxes of the period. Generally

speaking, refacing in brick tiles was intended to bring older buildings up-to-date.

As the main concentration of recorded brick tiles is in the south-east - Kent's current score of 229 coming second only to Sussex's 357 - the paper contributed by Terence Paul Smith on 'Brick-Tiles in East Kent' was particularly important. Described by him as an interim report its aims were to establish the overall distribution of examples, to examine the characteristics and uses of brick tiles within the area surveyed and to test the hypothesis that brick tiles are a predominantly urban phenomenon.

From the research conducted so far examples of brick tiles have been identified throughout much of East Kent. However, Mr. Smith feels that their concentration in the Faversham and Canterbury areas and their resemblance in colour to local bricks, yellow at Faversham, grey at Canterbury, suggests the local manufacture of brick tiles. The presence in these places of red brick tiles would seem to imply either that these were imported after local supplies were no longer available or that red became more fashionable in due course.

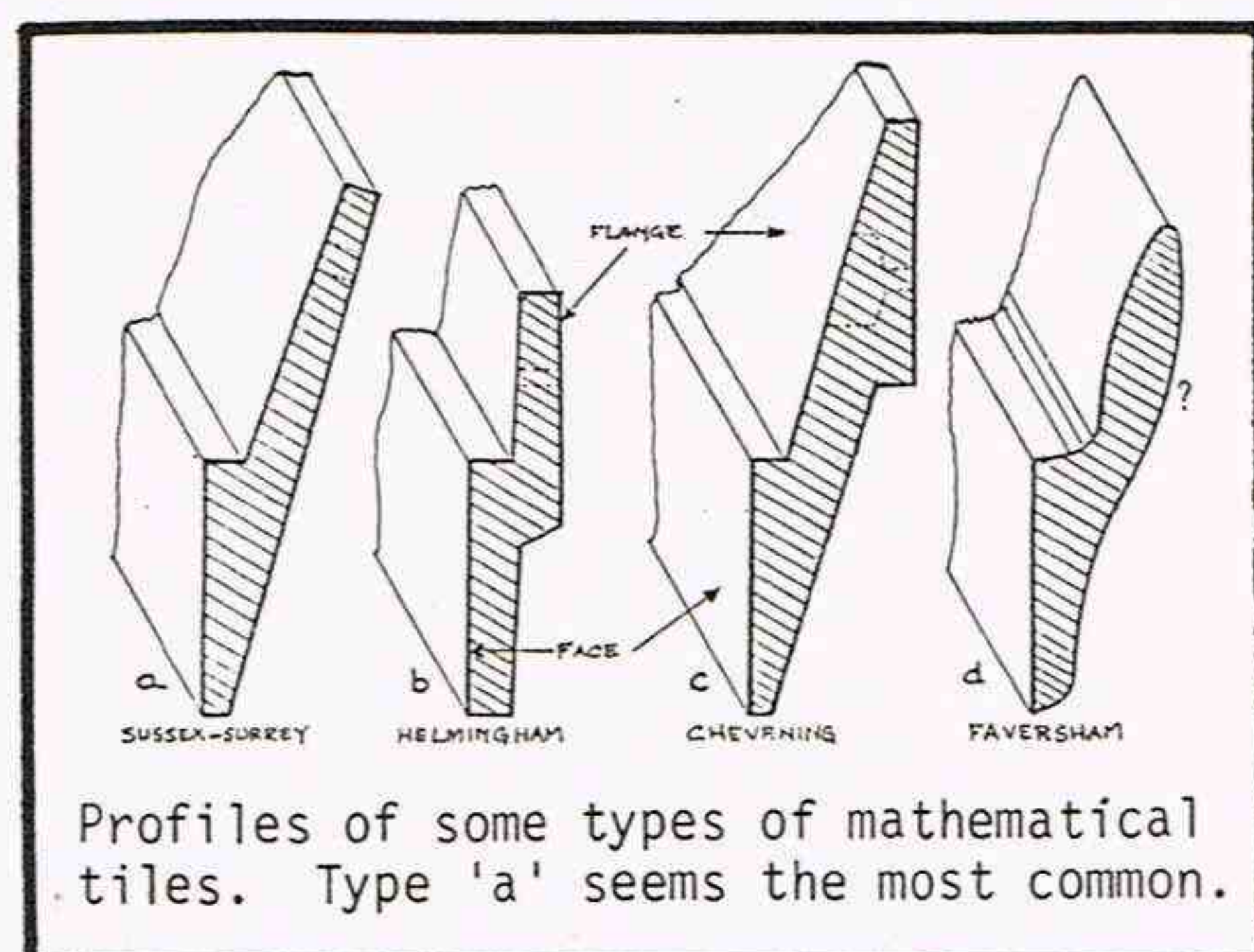
Proud owners and their builders often went to considerable lengths to disguise the fact that their houses were not "brick-built". For example specially made angle-tiles or ordinary brick tiles with bevelled edges were sometimes used to overcome the problem of corners, but normally a wooden plank was placed down the angle, often incised and painted to resemble quoins, e.g. 22 Palace Street, Canterbury. Where windows were recessed angle-tiles could be used, or, as at 7 The Butchery, Sandwich, the reveals were merely rendered. Wooden boards or

terracotta plaques with incised "mortar joints" often formed window heads - Newman's shop, High Street, Hythe, has a semi-circular arch-head board - while 15 East Street, Faversham, has a semi-circular door-head.

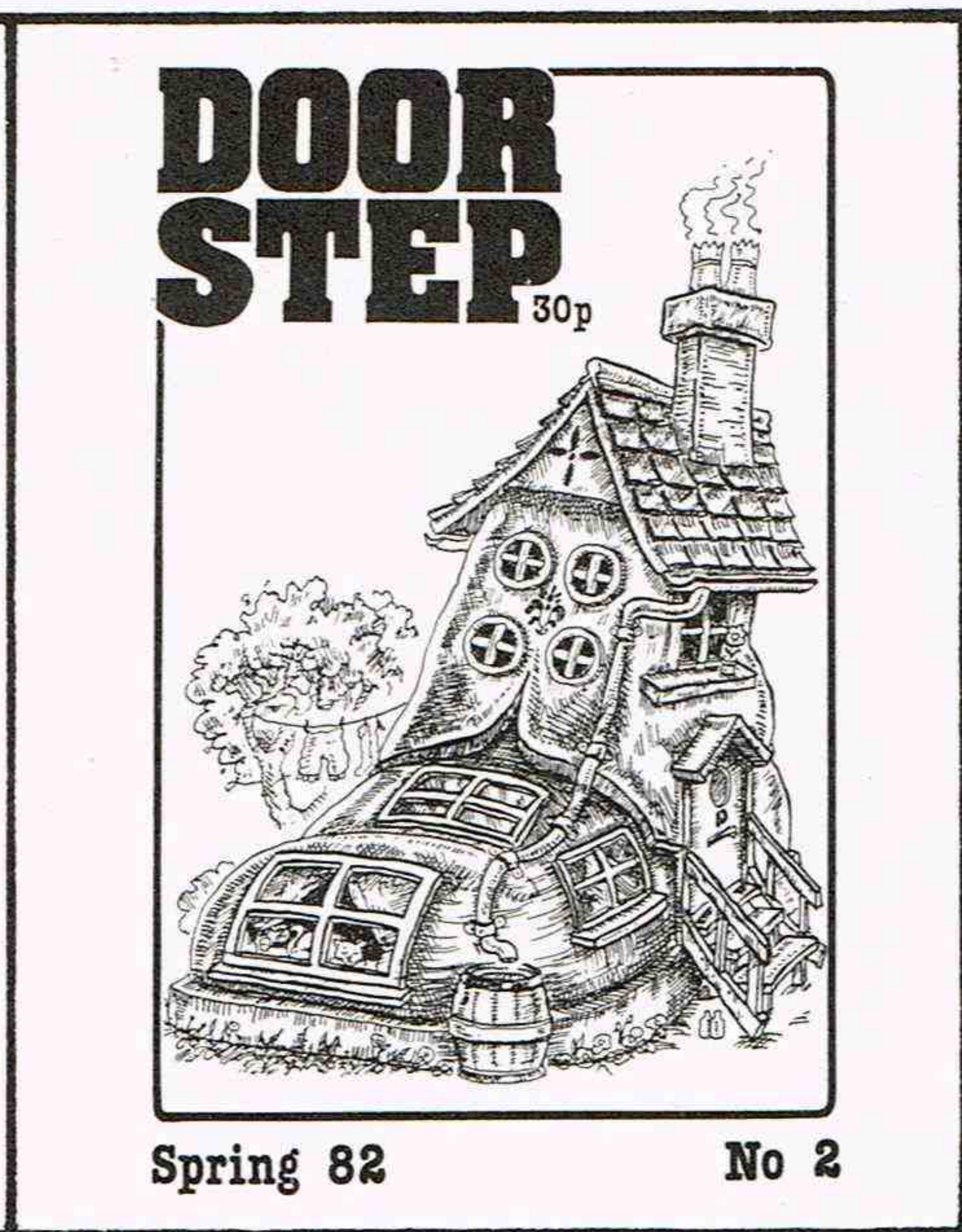
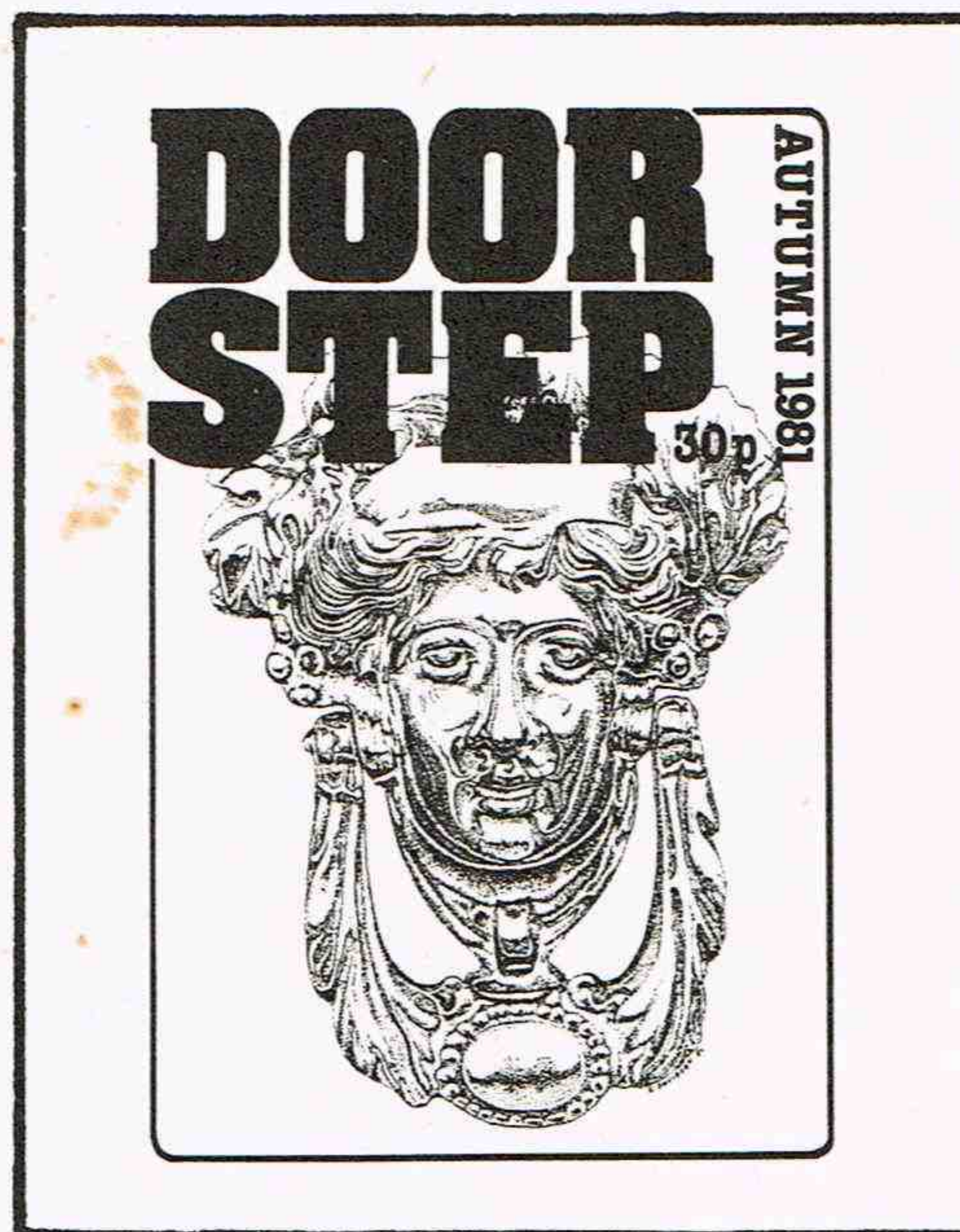
The hypothesis that brick tiles are a predominantly urban phenomenon is proved by the fact that of the 229 examples recorded in Kent so far, 197 are in towns and 32 in villages. Alec Clifton-Taylor has put forward the following explanation - "To people living in towns it seemed much more important to have a 'fashionable' looking house than it did to country people." The narrowness of some town streets, such as Mercery Lane and Butchery Lane, Canterbury, and bye-laws restricting encroachment on highways, may also have influenced the use of brick tiles in towns.

During the course of the symposium there was a general consensus that a National Record of Mathematical Tiles should be instituted. Records would be made on a standard recording sheet covering all extant examples together with any that have now been destroyed and of which sufficient information is available to enable a record sheet to be compiled.

It is hoped that the records will eventually be housed at the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum at Singleton, West Sussex. Mr. R.G. Martin has offered to co-ordinate the National Record on behalf of the Museum and all queries regarding recording should be directed to him at 42 Falmer Avenue, Saltdean, Brighton, BN2 8FG (Tel: Brighton 33805). Copies of the Notes of the Ewell Symposium are available (price £1, incl. post. - cheques payable to "V A G Ewell Symposium") from: Maurice Exwood, 64 The Green, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT17 3JJ.







The first two covers of the magazine produced by 'Kent Urban Heritage'.

## Kent Urban Heritage

Architecture and the study of buildings falls outside the scope of the traditional school curriculum and as a result many people are unaware of the richness of our urban heritage. Yet it is recognised by the Americans and other foreigners who come here in great numbers to visit our historic cities. Nor are ancient monuments and show-pieces the only subject of attention. At the turn of the century, for instance, the 'arts and crafts' movement excited comment throughout the world and had a considerable influence on domestic architecture. More recently our garden cities and new towns have been studied with great care by many other nations.

Exploring, investigating and learning about the built environment can be extremely enjoyable. It can also lead to a much deeper appreciation of our towns and cities. 'Kent Urban Heritage' was formed some four years ago to promote this interest.

Previous issues of the Bulletin have already mentioned the work of some of the Urban Studies and Heritage Centres currently operating in the county. 'Kent Urban Heritage' aims to co-ordinate the activities of these different bodies. But it is also more than just a clearing house. It runs a mobile exhibition service, provides lectures and talks on request, and organises guided walks. The next of these, a tour of Tenterden, will be on 7 August (contact Tenterden Museum for details).

In addition 'Kent Urban Heritage' has recently been engaged in running a poetry competition on urban themes. The competition, entitled 'Street Seen', attracted literally hundreds of entries. The response has been so enthusiastic

that plans are now afoot to assemble the best entries in an illustrated anthology.

This will not be the first time 'Kent Urban Heritage' has ventured into publishing. For the last eighteen months it has produced its own magazine, 'Doorstep', which covers a wide range of urban themes. Each issue contains a major article by a local expert, a town trail, details of news and events, and book reviews. Forthcoming features include a survey of house windows and an illustrated description of the little-known Grand Shaft in the Dover cliffs.

Like many societies and groups, 'Kent Urban Heritage' depends entirely on the dedication and efforts of a small band of volunteers. It receives no financial support or assistance and has to raise all its own funds. But by pooling the limited resources of member organisations it has been able to undertake a varied and interesting programme. Hopefully its activities are contributing to the understanding and appreciation of the urban environment.

This article was contributed by Stephen Scoffham, of 'Kent Urban Heritage'. 'Doorstep' is obtainable from most leading bookshops (price 30p) or by post from Monica Headley, 2 McCarthy Avenue, Sturry, Canterbury, Kent. The annual subscription of £1.00 covers two issues (incl. post & packing). Cheques should be made payable to 'Kent Urban Heritage'.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

should be forwarded to:  
The County Planning Officer,  
Springfield, Maidstone, Kent  
ME14 2LS (marked Kent Conservation Bulletin). Enquiries:  
Maidstone 671411, Ext. 3115.

## Listed Buildings

### REVISED DARTFORD LIST

On 17 March, 1982, the Secretary of State for the Environment formally approved the revised Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the area of the former Swanscombe Urban District and the parishes of Darenth, Southfleet, Stone, Sutton-at-Hone and Wilmington - part of the former Dartford Rural District. The number of statutorily listed buildings has been increased from 61 to 147. The area contains a great variety in both building periods and building materials. These range from medieval knapped flint and stone buildings represented by the tower at Stone Castle, St. John's Jerusalem and the Old Friary at Southfleet to the 19C. stone-faced Ingress Abbey at Greenhithe. Industrial buildings are represented by a kiln and drying shed to a Whiting Works at Stone.

### 1930's CHURCH LISTED

The Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea, on the outskirts of Broadstairs, has just been statutorily listed by the Secretary of State for the Environment. It was designed in 1930-1 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, the architect of the Anglican Cathedral at Liverpool. Built in flint, with stone dressings and pantiled roofs, the composition of this church is somewhat unusual, with its tall tower and very high apsidal chancel grouped at the east end. The tower windows set within tall blank arches are typical of Scott.

## Wittersham Mill opened

Stocks Mill, Wittersham, the tallest of Kent's remaining post-mills, was officially opened to the public on Easter Sunday by the Mayor of Ashford, Councillor J. Smith. The mill, which has the date "1781" carved on its centre post, was given to Kent County Council in 1979 by Mr. & Mrs. R.S. Langton, who live in the adjacent Mill House, and it is the seventh mill to be acquired by the County Council. Since then a phased scheme of restoration work has been undertaken by the County Council, and a local group known as "The Friends of Stocks Mill" has been set up under the chairmanship of Mr. Langton to be involved with public viewing and the preparation of mill exhibits and printed guides. Ashford Borough Council made a contribution from its lottery proceeds towards the cost of opening the mill to the public. The mill will be open each Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer manned by volunteers.