

# Canterbury

## A BRIEF HISTORY

Canterbury has been the site of a settlement since prehistoric times. When the Romans invaded they found a community of the Belgae at a ford on the River Stour. This was named Durovernum, and quickly expanded to become a town; the present city wall has Roman foundations dating from the third century. After 407, when Britain was to be part of the Roman Empire, the invading Angles, Jutes and Saxons built dwellings within the boundaries of the former Roman City. Several Christian churches were built in the city during the Roman occupation and the famous mission of St. Augustine reached Canterbury in 597. Ethelbert (King of Kent) was converted, and a number of early churches were restored to Christian use. These included St. Martin's and a church on the site of the present cathedral. It was soon after this that Canterbury became the metropolitan city of the English Church.

Long reasonably-preserved stretches of the town walls survive and tall overhanging houses can be seen in the lanes leading to the cathedral's main entrance. The original building on the cathedral site was destroyed by fire in 1067, and the present structure was started by Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop, in 1070. Parts of the crypt, some sections of the walls, and the nave ground plan are all that remain of his work. Anselm who followed Lanfranc, carried out a massive rebuilding of the choir and the east transepts. Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in the north-west transept of the cathedral in 1170 and the destruction of the choir by fire some four years later provided an opportunity to construct a worthy setting for the shrine of a new martyr saint. This may be seen in the Trinity Chapel. The rebuilding, which

involved the vertical and linear extension of the whole eastern end, was the work of two gifted architects—William of Sens and William the Englishman. It was the first English example of the transition from Norman round to pointed Gothic arches, and has remained substantially unaltered since the end of the 12thc. Other parts of the cathedral that have been changed include the western section, the nave and the south-west tower, and the noble central tower (Bell Harry) all of which were rebuilt or altered between c1400 and c1500.

When the nave was reconstructed by Henry Yevele, the Great Cloister was also rebuilt in its present form. The precincts are entered through the Christ Church gate of 1517. No other important changes were made until 1834, when the Norman tower was pulled down to make way for the present north-west tower, matching the south-west tower of 1424 to 1434, and a new cathedral library was built. This was destroyed in an air raid in 1942 and has been replaced. Many interesting monuments housed in the cathedral include the tomb of the Black Prince, and one of Henry IV and his wife Joan of Navarre. Some of the oldest stained glass in the world can be seen here. Other features of outstanding interest are the Norman crypt, the 12thc choir with its 14thc screen, the Corona (or Becket's crown), the slender Norman tower, and John Wastell's great 15thc Angel Steeple or Bell Harry tower.

Kings School is one of the oldest extant, and has a unique Norman exterior staircase. The remains of St. Augustine's Abbey (AM) display a gateway of c1300 and are incorporated in a college. St. Martin's Church is perhaps the oldest working church in

England, and was standing before St. Augustine arrived. St. Dunstan's shows Saxon work and houses the head of Sir Thomas More, who was executed in 1535. Izaak Walton was married in 13thc St. Mildred's Church. The other city churches also display items of great interest.

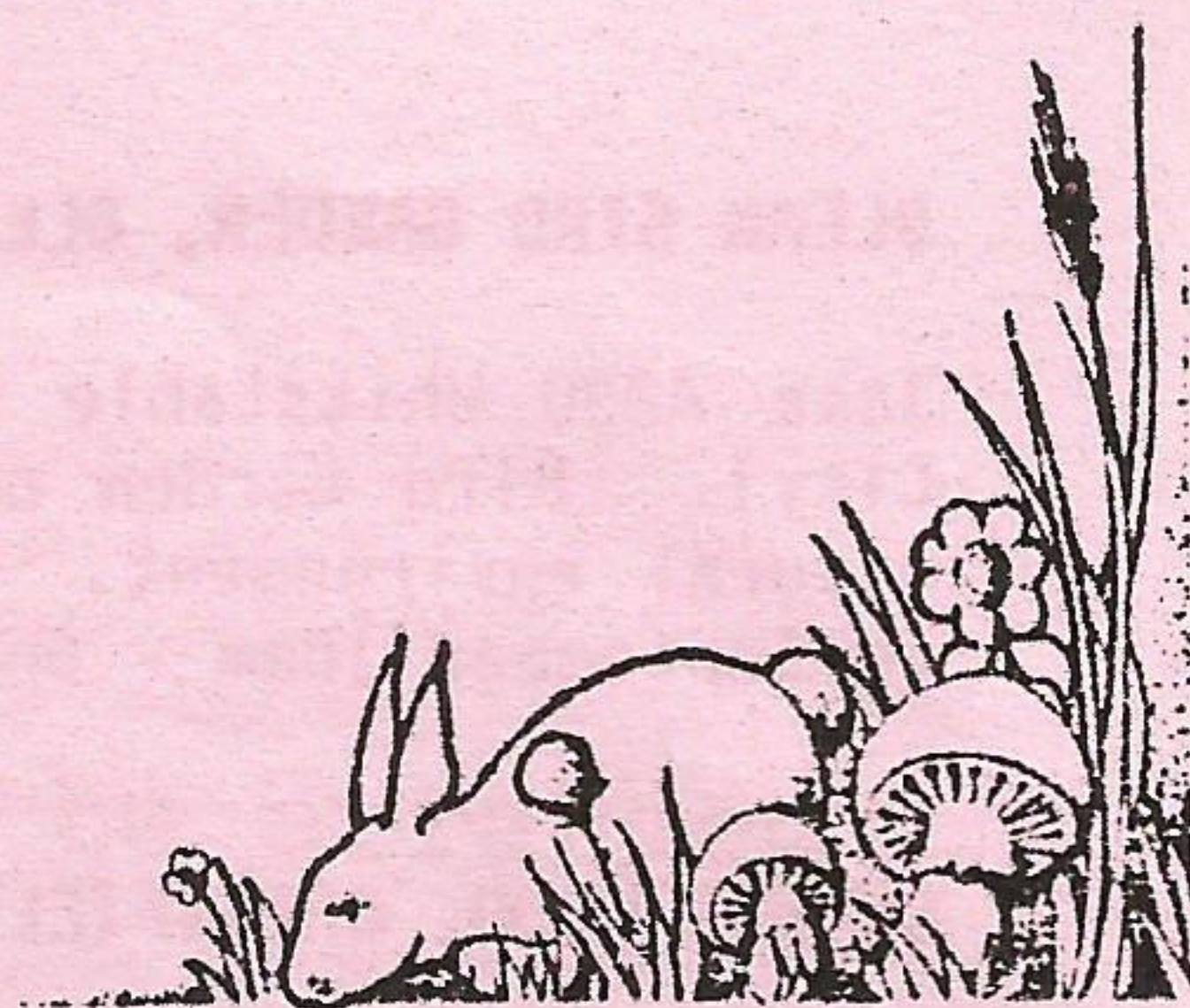
Canterbury's interesting West Gate now contains a museum of armour and is the only surviving gate in the city walls. St. Thomas's Hospital preserves a Norman hall, Black Friars refectory dates from c1300 and St. John's Hospital from 1074. The Roper gateway survives from the house where Sir Thomas More's daughter lived, and 13thc Greyfriars friary stands in a garden near the Stour. The Weavers are an attractive collection of old houses overlooking the Stour and the Falstaff is an interesting old inn. Poor Priests' Hospital dates from the 14thc.

Recently excavated Roman paving can be seen in Butchery Lane, and remains of the castle and stretches of the city walls lie close to Dane John, an ancient fortification. Kent University (1961) was designed by Lord Holford and has been founded on the Whitstable road.

Christopher Marlowe the playwright was born at Canterbury in 1564, and R. H. Barham, author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*, lived at 61 Burgate. The 16thc House of Agnes on St. Dunstan's Street has associations with Dickens's *David Copperfield*. The town suffered greatly from indiscriminate bombing during the Second World War, and subsequent rebuilding has altered some of its character. A county-cricket ground is sited in Canterbury, and Cricket Week, held annually in August of each year, is famous.



# Nature Reserves - Wild Life Sanctuaries



## LARKEY VALLEY WOODS, COCKERING ROAD, THANINGTON

107 acres of woodland, given by the then Mayor to the City in 1932. Leave Canterbury via A28 Ashford Road at Wincheap and take the first (or second) turning to the left after crossing the by-pass bridge. Larkey Valley Woods is on the left. (Leaflet available at Tourist Office or at Woods entrance)

## MINCING WOOD BLEAN

Take the A290 Whitstable Road. Access to the woods is 3 miles north of Canterbury on the left, opposite Vicarage Lane.

## STODMARSH BIRD SANCTUARY

Leave Canterbury on A257 Sandwich Road off New Dover Road. At the top of St. Martin's Hill, immediately past the Golf Course on left, turn left into Stodmarsh Road. Continue on this road for 3 miles to the village of Stodmarsh. In the village, fork left past the Red Lion Public House. There is a small car park down this road. The public are welcome to walk along the flood protection barrier, known as the Lampen Wall. This provides excellent vantage points for bird watchers. Warden of the Reserve is Mr. P.J. Mountford, 'Reedlings', Stodmarsh, Canterbury. Tel. Littlebourne (code from Canterbury 78) 200.

## VAUXHALL LAKES, BROAD OAK ROAD, CANTERBURY

Visits by appointment only. Contact The Warden, Mr. T.W. Harman, Canterbury Field Study Centre. Tel. Canterbury (0227) 52447. Entry to the site is opposite B & Q (Hardware supermarket).

## WEALDEN WOODLAND, HERNE COMMON

Take A28 Margate Road. After crossing the railway at Sturry, take left fork up the hill towards Herne Bay. Wealden Woodland is about 3 miles from Sturry on the left. Natural Trail, picnic area, English wildlife, Butterfly Farm, Garden Centre, Gift Shop, Kentish Teas, and various attractions. Open daily: March - November. Tel. Canterbury (0227) 710694.

### **BLEAN BIRD GARDEN, BLEAN**

Take A290 Whitstable Road through Blean to Honey Hill (about 4 miles from City). Bird Garden on right - Macaws, Cockatoos, Owls, Pheasants etc. in natural environment. Car Park, Woodland Picnic area. Open daily: Easter to September 10am - 6pm. Tel. Blean (code from Canterbury 77) 666.

### **CLOWES WOOD, CHESTFIELD**

Take the A290 Whitstable Road and at the top of St. Thomas' Hill turn right into Giles Lane, passing through the University grounds. At the far side of the grounds, turn left towards Chestfield. (Alternative route from Canterbury via St. Stephen's Hill). Clowes Wood is two miles from the University on the left, just past the 'Whitstable' boundary sign. Car park.

### **FORESTRY COMMISSION FORESTS, OUTSIDE THE CANTERBURY AREA**

#### **KINGS WOOD**

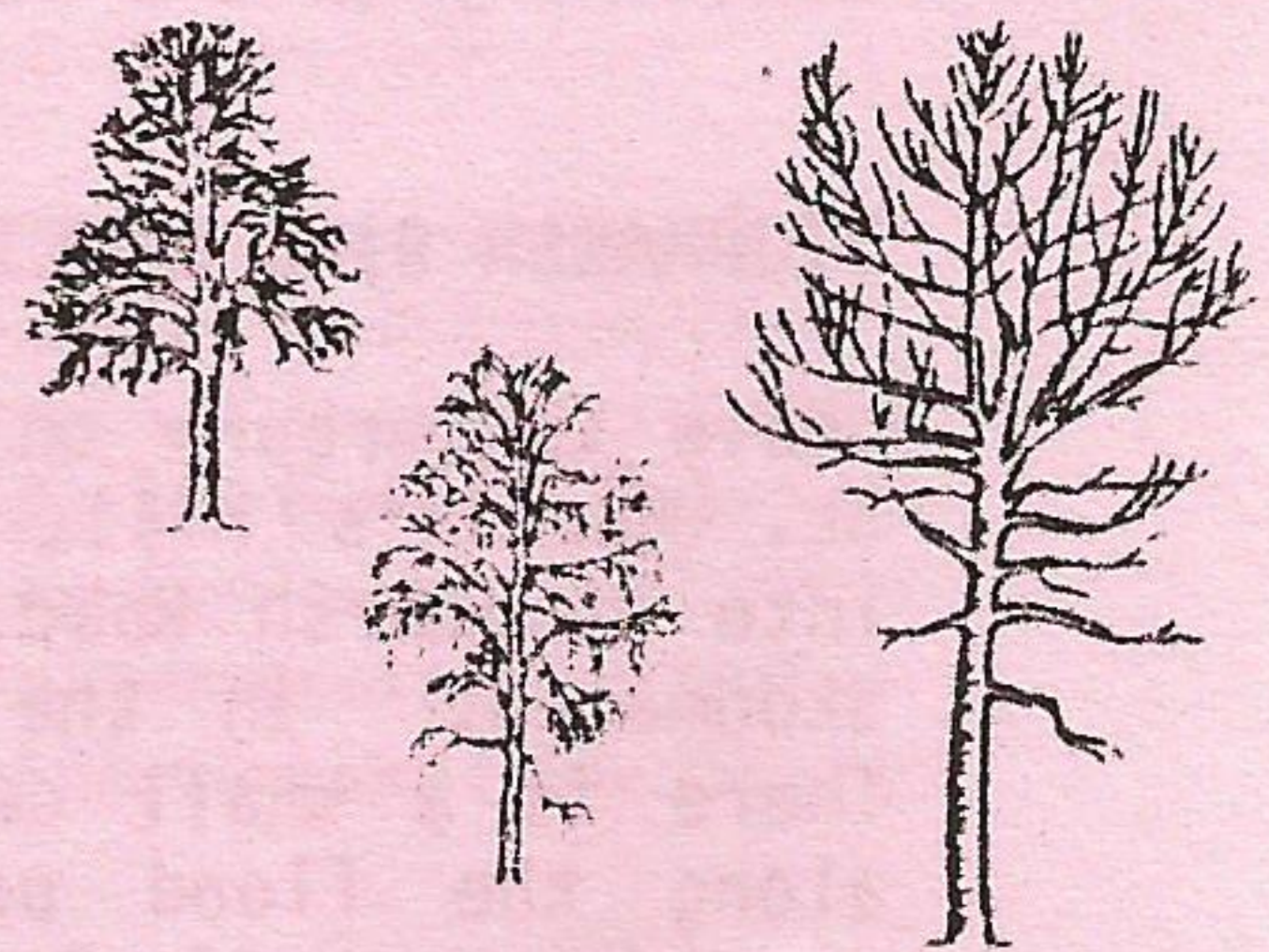
On A251,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from Challock Crossroads in the Ashford direction.

#### **WEST WOOD**

Off the B2068 (Stone Street) east of Stowting, 2 miles north-west of Lyminge, 8 miles south of Canterbury. Car park.

#### **FAGG'S WOOD**

From Ashford, take A2070 towards New Romney. Turn west  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Ashford. Car park.





GUIDED TOURS OF THE CITY can be arranged through:-

Canterbury Guild of Guides  
Virgilia House  
12 St. Thomas' Hill  
Canterbury, Kent  
CT2 8EH (Tel. 0227.59779)

GUIDED TOURS THROUGH THE CATHEDRAL can be arranged through:-

The Guides Office  
11b The Precincts  
Canterbury, Kent  
CT1 2EH (Tel. 0227.64212)

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Reduced rates for School Parties to the ROMAN PAVEMENT and WESTGATE can be arranged through:-

The Curator  
The Royal Museum  
High Street  
Canterbury, Kent  
CT1 2JF (Tel. 0227.52747)

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City Amenities Dept.  
TIC 1/82

**Canterbury**  
CITY COUNCIL