

**In brief**

**Your views on yellow lines**

**CANTERBURY:** The city council is asking residents to have their say on the proposal to introduce new single and double yellow lines and other changes to on-street parking restrictions. Requests for changes to parking restrictions from residents and councillors are received by the city council each year and are considered in the annual parking review.

Executive member for transportation, Councillor Peter Vickery-Jones, said: "These changes could affect how people park right outside their house, and this is why they need to be carefully considered." Canterbury residents have until Monday, February 3 to comment at [www.canterbury.gov.uk/yellowlines](http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/yellowlines).

Alternatively, residents can write to **Transportation Manager, Canterbury City Council, Military Road, Canterbury, CT1 1YW** or e-mail [richard.jenkins@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:richard.jenkins@canterbury.gov.uk)

**Space to learn**

**CANTERBURY:** As part of the BBC Stargazing LIVE session, the Canterbury Academy is hosting a free Space Spectacular on January 18 from 7pm until 10pm with fun activities for all the family.

In two planetariums and across the campus, activities will include astronomy talks, rocket launching, a 3.9 billion year-old meteorite and space related displays.

Matt Harris, teacher of science at Canterbury Academy, said: "This Space Spectacular promises to be one of the largest Stargazing LIVE events in Kent."

# Three date stones mask the story of crystal clear water

NOT many Canterbury buildings have three date stones to help the local historian, but this is the case with Dunelm and Carpet Right in Wincheap. The three dates are 1869, 2001 and 2002.

So what do they mean? This site was chosen in the late 1860s as the centre for a new water supply scheme for the city. The choice of design for the new large building was unusual and vaguely colonial – apparently making use of plans intended originally for India. The new plant was designed and run by Samuel Collett Homersham, a hydraulic engineer with special interests in patterns of rainfall and water softening.

The complex, built in 1869 and operational by 1870, included a massive pumping engine that could be heard and felt a mile away, boiler house, coal store, chimney, cooling pond and water reservoirs. Water was drawn from two deep bore holes in the chalk at the rate of 1,000 gallons a minute and pumped under pressure through a 12 inch main pipe to a 350,000 gallon holding tank on the top of St Thomas' Hill, near what is now Kent College. The tank was 60 ft across and nearly 20 ft deep, half underground and the rest above.

Attached to the wall of the chief engineer's office in Wincheap was a telescope trained on the holding tank on the hill one and a half miles



to the north. His eyes were focused on a large red disc, cut in two – the upper half was fixed but the lower half was attached to a float in the holding tank. The chief engineer knew that, when the red disc was complete, the holding tank was full. A water tower was added in 1928 and still stands nearby. This wonderfully Heath Robinson arrangement lasted until 1993, when the reservoir was taken out of use.

So, what did our forefathers in the 1870s make of the new scheme? Prior to this their water supply would have been taken direct from the Stour or from the storage tank in the castle or from local wells. They noticed several differences: the Wincheap water was extracted at a permanent temperature of 51° fahrenheit, it was 'free from living or dead germs or organisms of any kind and from organic matter animal or vegetable'; it was 'clear, colourless and bright'; 'pleasant and refreshing to the taste' and it had no taint of gas, as



was evident with supplies from the castle which also served as the city gas supply.

Another significant change was that the new water supply was delivered under high mains pressure. This was of vital importance to the fire services, whose hoses could now reach 'half way up the flag mast on the Westgate'.

The benefits of the high pressure supply were confirmed in 1876 when an explosion in the clock workings above the south west door of the cathedral, caused by workmen using benzoline and an unauthorised naked flame lamp, started a fire inside the tower.

In April 1997 owners of the pumping station (by now Mid Kent Water) sought permission to pull down the building in order to repair boreholes at the site.

Despite a petition organised by the Wincheap Society and signed by 1,000 people, consent was given, with a proviso that the

**TRANSFORMED:** Dunelm and Carpet Right today



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space related displays.

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Despite a petition organised by the Wincheap Society and signed by 1,000 people, consent was given, with a proviso that the replacement building should be a replica of its predecessor. The resulting retail space was opened on August 27, 2001 for Courts Furniture company. In 2002 an extension was added, now used by Carpet Right. The remainder of the site is now used by Dunelm. Hence the need for three date stones.

So, what remains of this impressive Victorian enterprise? At the pumping house site some of the walls and ironwork look original.

A short section of the main supply pipe can still be seen where it crosses the Stour River, there are still a few 'CWW' metal cover plates left in the city and the remains of the water tank beside the water tower on St Thomas' Hill are still there but are in a dangerous state and unfit for public access.

Perhaps we should add a word of thanks for all the disease and death avoided through provision of clean water, and for all the fires that didn't get out of control as the water pressure could cope?

More details on the city's water supply can be found on the CHAS web site at [www.canterbury-archaeology.org.uk](http://www.canterbury-archaeology.org.uk)



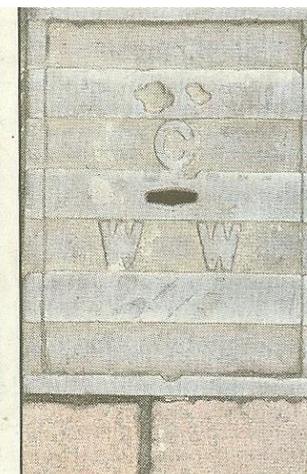
**STEP BACK IN TIME ONLINE**

Read more tales from Canterbury's past at

[canterburytimes.co.uk/nostalgia](http://canterburytimes.co.uk/nostalgia)



**UNUSUAL:** The three construction dates on the modern building



**SIGN:** An original Canterbury Water Works hatch cover



**MORE MODERN:** The water tower near Kent College built in 1928



**MEAGRE REMAINS:** Ironwork dating from 1869