

CHAS SCANS

Between 1977 and 2002 Canterbury Urban Studies Centre and Canterbury Environment Centre published around 30 guides and city trails describing various aspects of Canterbury's past. Both organisations were based in St Alphege church.

Between them they produced 14 titles in the 'Trails' series, and a further 16 titles outside the main series. All are now out of print and many are difficult (a few impossible) to find through normal second hand sources. Many contain information that is not readily available in other printed or on line sources.






CHAS (Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society) is scanning a selection of these publications for uploading to the CHAS website as PDFs. In this way a new generation of readers and researchers can have access to this unique resource.

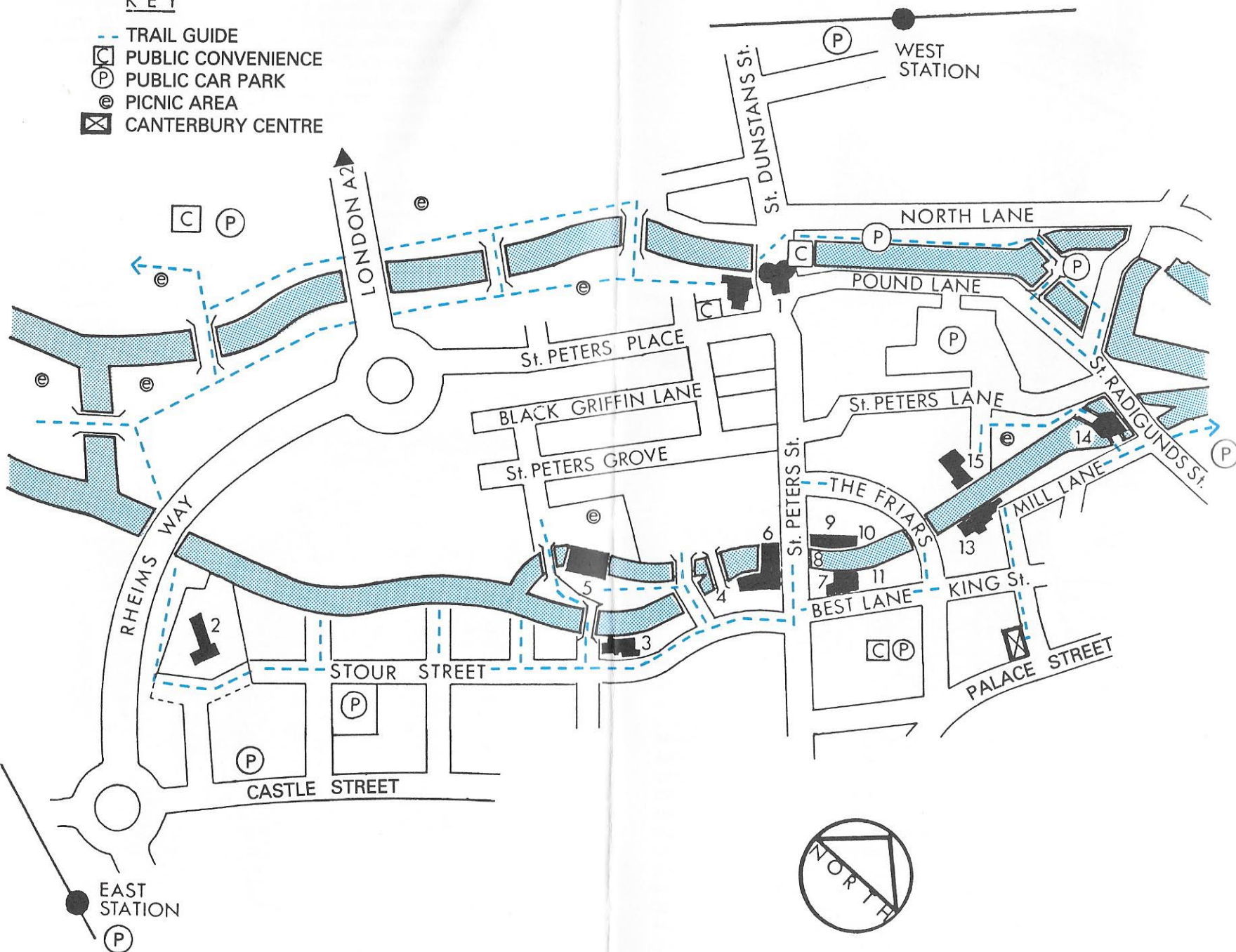
A full list of these publications appears on the CHAS website:

<http://www.canterbury-archaeology.org.uk>

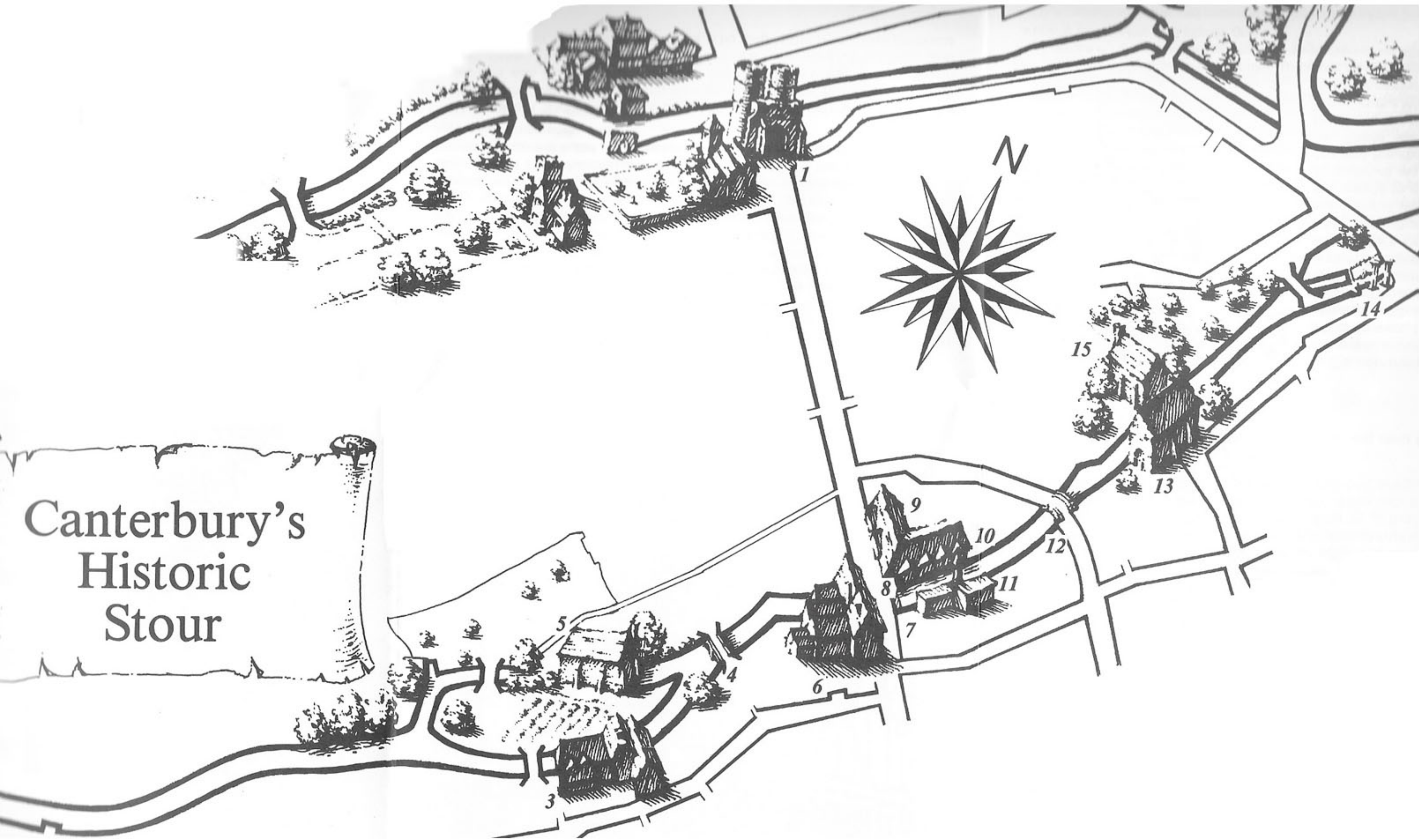
Note: this publication was printed as a single large folded sheet

KEY

-  TRAIL GUIDE
-  PUBLIC CONVENIENCE
-  PUBLIC CAR PARK
-  PICNIC AREA
-  CANTERBURY CENTRE



Canterbury's
Historic
Stour



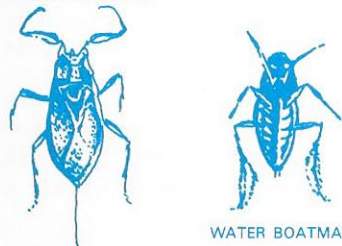
INTRODUCTION

The Great Stour rises in the Weald, flows across the North Downs and is at Canterbury a clear 'chalk stream' with a mainly gravel bottom. The early riverside settlement of Canterbury was at a convenient crossing point of the river by a branch of the North Downs Trackway. The surrounding countryside had fertile, well-drained silty soil. In Saxon and later medieval times the Stour was navigable as far as Fordwich, 4 km downstream. For many centuries it provided power (the mills), food (fish), sewage disposal and defence. It also provided drinking water—sometimes polluted. There were many mills and other industries which relied on the river: two mills were working even fifty years ago. The nearest surviving mill is Barton Mill, 1 km downstream from the city, and the tannery is the only industry still directly dependent on the water. In more recent times the river has been increasingly viewed as an amenity.

The present Stour divides at Bingley's Island just before it reaches the walled town. The branch running through the town did not exist in Roman times and was caused by flooding and the rise of the water table in Saxon times. Other channels were later cut in the Greyfriars, Blackfriars and Causeway areas, mainly for water mills. The loop in the Dominican precincts no longer exists.

You may see wild duck, moorhens and swans in the city. There are a few domestic ducks and sometimes herons at quiet times. Both pied and yellow wagtails can often be seen and many of the small birds common in gardens nest here by the river: blue tits, great tits, chaffinches and sparrows. In the summer there is the wonder of the swifts screaming overhead; they nest

WATER SCORPION



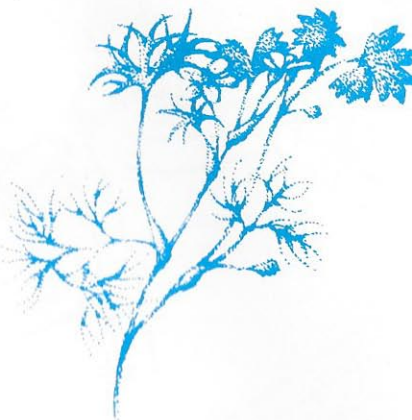
WATER BOATMAN

under many of the eaves in town as do some house martins and swallows. Water voles and brown rats can be spotted in the wilder parts. Fresh water crayfish have been re-introduced to the river—they look like tiny lobsters. You can find many kinds of water insects: the voracious great diving beetle and the water boatman, caddis fly larvae with their bits-and-pieces cases, dangerous looking dragonfly nymphs and water scorpions. On the surface you will see pond skaters and the seemingly demented whirligig beetles. The waters around Canterbury are good trout streams with brown trout and a few migratory sea trout. Of the coarse fish there are roach, bream, dace, some barbel and small pike. For those with nets and jam-jars there are minnows, little eels and miller's thumbs. Fishing is free in the city limits but outside the water is private: contact Canterbury and District Angling Association, Mill Road, Sturry.



KINGFISHER

WATER CROWFOOT

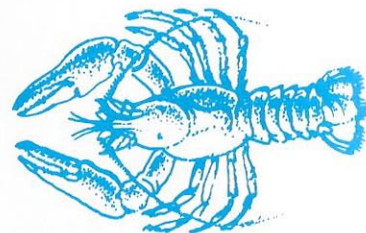


is the alder with its pretty cone-like fruits and its early spring catkins. You will notice on your walk some areas of neglected or wild bank where a wide variety of flowers and plants grow.

It is possible to row and canoe along stretches of the Stour and boats can be hired in summer. People, especially children, do swim in some parts of the river but please wear shoes if you decide to have a dip. There is a large indoor pool at Kingsmead. It is now possible to walk along Canterbury's riverside from Toddlers' Cove in the west to Kingsmead in the east through the city along its various branches.

Begin at the Westgate Bridge, rebuilt in the 19th century on the site of the earliest crossing. By the bridge there is a post to measure the height of the river. The massive Westgate 1 is the only surviving gate in the city's defences, built of Kentish ragstone and still possessing its portcullis. Started in 1380 (see *City Trail No. 1*), this is now a museum. Enter the Westgate Gardens, the gardens are open from 7.30 am to dusk. On your left is Holy Cross Church, begun in 1380 and extensively restored, now the City Guildhall. The walls are of flint—another local but cheaper material. Walk along where once a parchment mill stood and notice the steps down to the river on the opposite bank and a drain where a stream from St. Thomas's Hill enters the river. The small house on the opposite bank is on the site of the Westgate Mill, mentioned in Domesday, and is part of the buildings of Cock Mill. The arched ruin on this bank is a Victorian folly made of medieval masonry and recently restored. Tower House, faces you, a Victorian building built onto a 14th century bastion of the wall and now the Mayor's Parlour. Notice its gables and chimneys. The gardens surround the house and extend along both banks. They were given to the city in 1936 by the Williamson family who owned the Tannery. There are many pieces of ancient masonry brought from St. Augustine's Abbey decorating the rockeries and walks in the garden. In the summer there are art exhibitions in the gardens and the river here is particularly shallow, ideal for boating. Notice how the bank is here

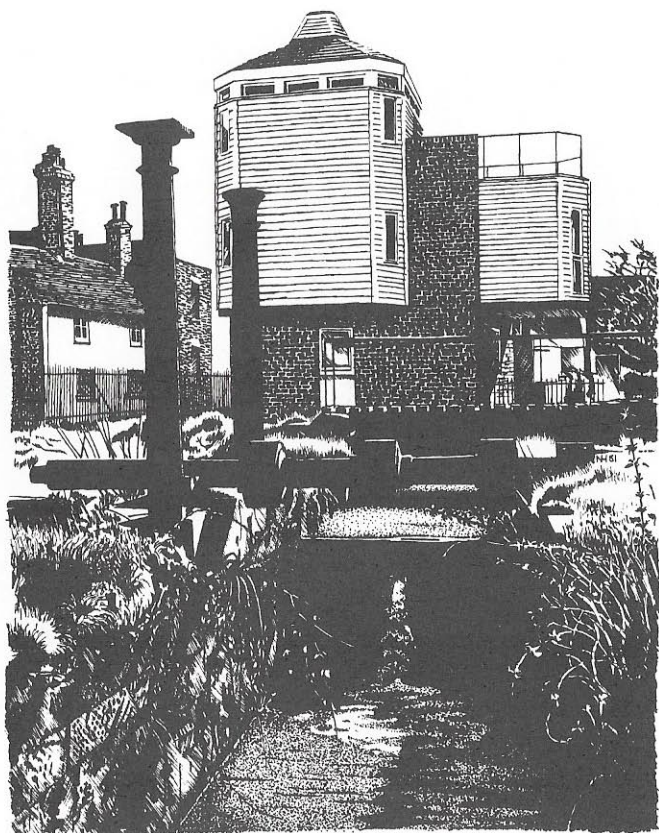
The commonest water plants are water crowfoot with its little white flowers, bunches of water starwort with little roundels of very pale leaves, riverwater dropwort coming out of the water like hedge parsley and some fool's cress. The run-off from agricultural fertilisers and enrichment with sewage cause the weeds to grow too strongly in summer so they are cut to prevent the river from clogging up. There are willows by the river, the most spectacular are those in the Westgate Gardens. Another common river-side tree

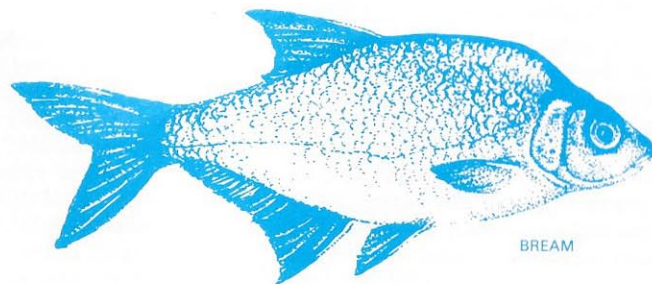


FRESHWATER CRAYFISH

supported by timber. Cross either here or later and continue along the river under the concrete bridge. On your right is Toddlers' Cove, an adventure playground with swings, slides and climbing frames. If you take the single track road (behind the lavatory block and parallel to the river) you can walk on to Chartham and beyond along the Stour Valley Walk. Turning from Toddlers' Cove toward the city on your right there is Bingley's Island, planted by a local amenity society—a small nature reserve.

Walk towards the new road, but go down **under** the bridge along a path. The steps on your left cut through a bank of rammed chalk—all that remains of the city wall where there was once an arched water-gate. Cross the river by the wooden bridge and walk towards the church. Turn into Church Lane. On your right is the ruined keep of a Norman castle and on your left St. Mildred's Church 2 one of the oldest parish churches in Canterbury. Notice too the old school building now converted into a terrace of houses. Church Lane leads into Stour Street, a narrow street running parallel to the river with a wide variety of building styles from the timber-framed late medieval buildings with an upstairs overhang (a jetty) to 19th century red brick terrace houses and the larger tannery buildings. St. Mildred's Tannery was established in 1791 and is the only remaining industry within the city walls.





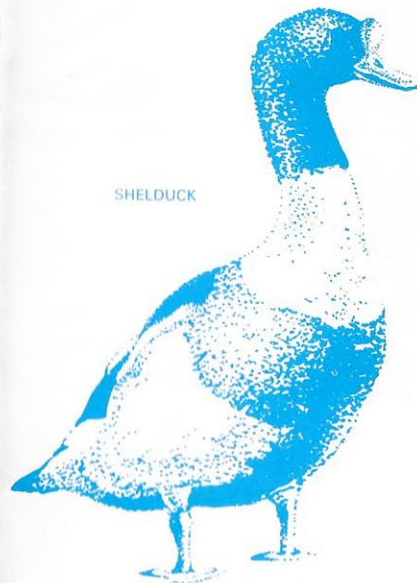
It has a collection of buildings from Georgian to modern—many listed of architectural interest. There are a number of little lanes to the river off Stour Street, the second (formerly Grey Friars Road) is especially worth a detour—there used to be a footbridge here. In Stour Street notice in particular the end of Maynard and Cotton almshouses (round in Hospital Lane), and Errol House, No. 68, which has an 18th century façade and the small restored houses of Stourvill. The dark-stained boarding of the river elevation of the new Stour Court gives something of the character of earlier riverside buildings. Here you can turn left down Water Lane, a new walled path leads across the back of the medieval precinct of the Greyfriars and into the Greyfriars garden. Do not take the path leading through the garden, winding at the back of 19th century houses and to St. Peter's Place and then Westgate Gardens again, but instead return to Stour Street and turn left. The long flint building with the Kent peg-tile roof is the Poor Priests Hospital **3** it is now Canterbury Heritage, a museum of the city's history. Further along on your left, through wooden gates in No. 6 (usually open) is a nursery garden and site of the Greyfriars monastery founded 1224.

If you look down river from the modern concrete bridge you will see the Franciscan Bridge **4**. Up river is the only remaining part of the friary **5** an old dormitory on the site of an earlier mill. It is a flint building standing on two arches over the river and has tall, narrow lancet windows. The Eucharist is celebrated here on Wednesdays at 12.30 pm. It is open to the public in summer. The only other remains of the friary are one of the walls around the garden, the archway by the dormitory and odd pieces of medieval masonry in flower beds. Walk back to Stour Street and notice the details of brick, tile and lettering on the industrial buildings on the opposite side. Turn left to the High Street and left again.

Around the King's Bridge is a cluster of ancient buildings. On your left, entered through a small low doorway is St. Thomas's Hospital **6**. The 12th century block is open to the public and the cold, quiet beauty of the undercroft is one of the city's great treasures. As you step out of the Hospital you see the front of No. 24 High Street, built in 1800 on the site of the King's Mill **7**. It looks as if it is made of bricks, but these are in fact mathematical tiles put on timber buildings to modernise them in the 18th and 19th centuries. Part of the tail race of the mill still exists under the King's Bridge **8**. There used to be a public lavatory here probably jutting out over the river, and it is said that in the 16th century a woman slipped through into the river and was drowned. The black and white building with its jetties and gables is known as The Weavers **9**. There was a large Huguenot community of weavers in Canterbury during the 16th and 17th centuries. The ducking

stool **10** hanging over the river is a replica of one used to punish petty criminals.

From here you have two choices. To get from the King's Bridge to the Friars Bridge you can either turn north and up the Friars, passing the secluded churchyard of St. Peter's, or south and up Best Lane where you can rest in the tiny churchyard of All Saints demolished in 1938. The Friars Bridge became a public right of way before the Dissolution. Looking upstream you will see the strange Alchemist's Tower **11** and the building with its timber upper storey once a forge **12**. There are large blocks of 12th century masonry in the river bank, remains of early attempts to regulate the course of the river. Looking downstream you will see the two remaining buildings of the Blackfriars **13** and **15**: the Refectory on the right with the Guest House opposite. Just to the right at the bridge is the Quaker Meeting House. An earlier one was destroyed in an air raid in 1942.



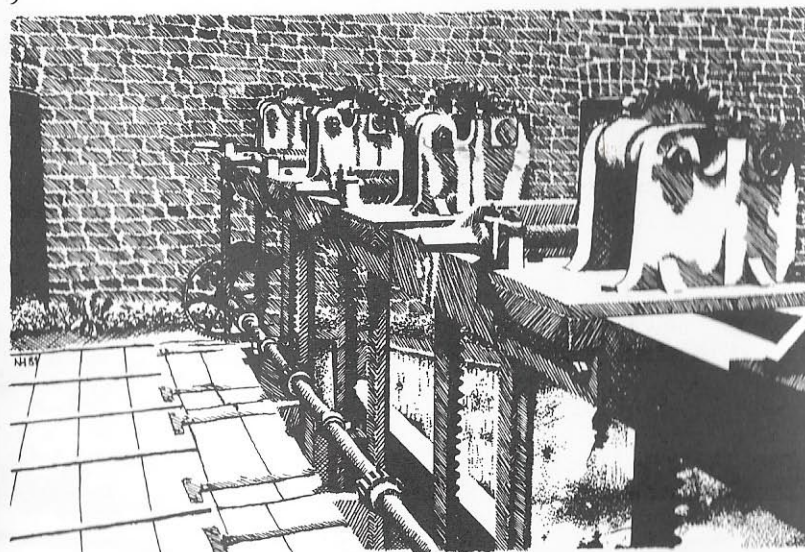
Walk a few metres towards the Cathedral and turn left up King Street (there are boats from here in the summer) and then left again along Blackfriars Street to the building at the end which was the refectory **13**. If it is open go up the steps and notice the timber wagon roof. The Guest House is reached

from Solly's Orchard (see below). Continue along Blackfriars Street with its neat 19th century brick opposing terraces. This was formerly one of the most notorious parts of Canterbury. The thick walls of No. 4 and 5 Mill Lane are probably caused by ancient repairs after the jetty collapsed. Opposite this is the Mill House, built in the 1970s on part of the site of the Abbot's Mill **14** a vast timber building (built by Thomas Eddystone of lighthouse fame) which burnt down in 1933—the sluices and some machinery still exist. The white weatherboard and the roof of Mill House echo the last mill which had an observatory on top. St. Radigund's Bridge spans the river along the line of the city wall. An early triple-arched bridge, called Waterlock Bridge, which carried the wall was demolished in 1769. Upstream you are looking into the city; see the iron sluice bridge made in 1829 and parts of the mill machinery. Downstream you are looking out of the city, perfect canoeing water, towards the Longbridge Leisure Centre and the Kingsmead Swimming Pool. The Riverside Walk now extends from here to Barton Mill and further still to Sturry, Fordwich and the nature reserves.

Cross the river by the three bridges on the mill site and enter Solly's Orchard, the ancient orchard of the friars with its apples and pears, now public land lovely for picnics. Beyond the orchard is the Dominican Guest House **15** now a privately owned youth and community centre. The Refectory is best seen from this side of the river; notice the large bell hanging under the open arch and the riverside pathway. Return to the bridge and cross to the Causeway over the sluice. The road takes you to



another bridge—on your right you will see the remaining parts of Hooker's or Dean's Mill, destroyed by fire in 1954. Cross back to Millers Field to see the sculptures formed from the bases of the trees downed in the hurricane of 1987. Notice the curling hair of the wind—once railings along the river bank. Across a sluice bridge on your left you can visit the tiny Butterfly Garden, and then cross the river to walk along the backs of the North Lane houses. The City Wall ran along the opposite bank—its 14th century bastions now houses. The converted brick and timber buildings along the bank were woolstores—notice the re-used timber and stone in the downstream end. Look at the river wall and notice the re-used stone there too. Before the Westgate is the old Police Station connected with the Westgate which was used for centuries as a gaol. It has a very solid brick wall to the



river and bars still at the windows; it is now a music school. Low down there is a beautifully made stone culvert with a metal grill. Look again at the bridge from this side with its brick piers and stone above and you are back where the trail began.

OPEN HOURS

Westgate Museum: 11.00-12.30 and 1.30-3.30 Monday to Saturday. Adults 60p, children 30p.

Westgate Gardens: 7.30 a.m. until dusk.

Canterbury Heritage Museum: Monday to Saturday 10.30-4.00 and Sunday afternoons in Summer.

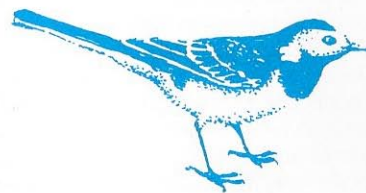
Greyfriars: Mid-May to October—open Monday-Saturday, 2-4 pm.

Eastbridge Hospital: 10.00 (Sundays 11.00) to 5.00.

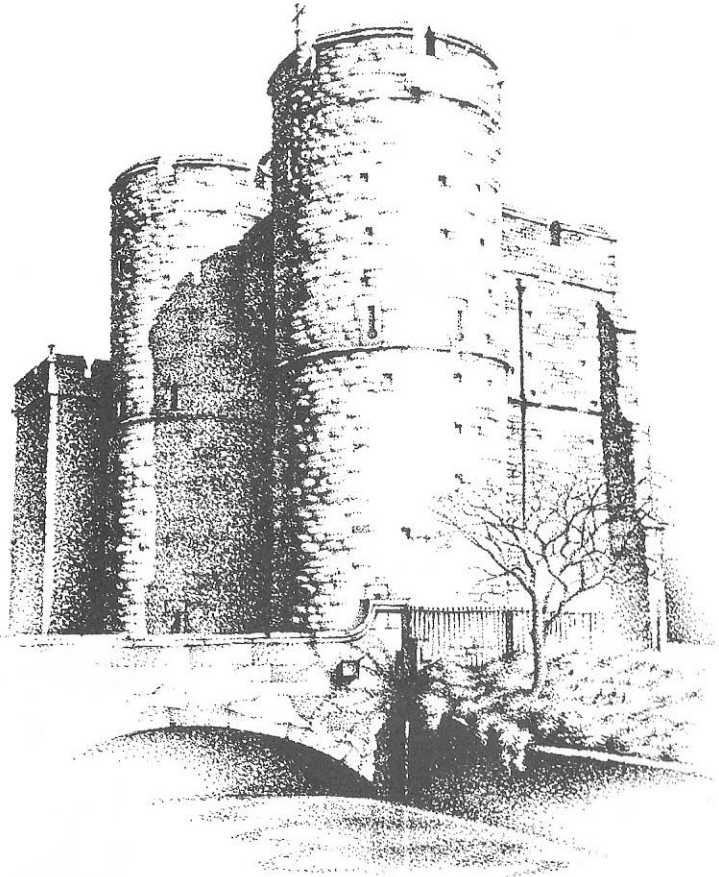
Boat Hire: Blackfriars by Dominican Refectory, late Spring to October. 10.00-5.00 (Monday-Friday) to 6.30 (Saturday-Sunday).

The Canterbury Centre: Wednesday to Saturday 10.30-5.00.

Text by John Butler and Caroline Simpson. Design and illustrations by John Butler, Nick Harrison and Christine Murphy, Canterbury College of Art. Amendments to 2nd edition maps by Mike Crux. Produced by Canterbury Urban Studies Centre. Revised edition © 1993. Printed in England by Telen Printing Ltd.



PIED WAGTAIL



1 The Westgate

This is the last remaining gate in the city wall. It is made of Kentish ragstone and incorporates some bricks in its structure. It was built by Archbishop Simon of Sudbury c. 1380 who rebuilt the city's defences, and was possibly designed by Henry Yevele. From c. 1430 to 1829 Westgate was the city gaol. The old prison cells retain their original doors and fittings and there is a collection of old fetters, manacles, gyves and other related items. From the roof of the gate you can see the slide for the portcullis and the holes for the chains which raised the drawbridge. It is now a museum.

2 St. Mildred's Church

St. Mildred's Church is one of the oldest parish churches in Canterbury. The south wall and part of the west wall are of the 8th century—massive megalithic quoins at the south west corner and reused Roman tiles along the south wall. Following a fire in 1246, the church was partially rebuilt. The southern chapel was added during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) by Atwood, a former Mayor of the City. The tower in the middle of the north aisle was demolished in 1822. St. Mildred, great-great-grand-daughter of King Ethelbert was a popular Kentish Saint. She founded a convent in Minster, Thanet, and her body was acquired by St. Augustine's Abbey in Canterbury. The Church of St. Mildred figured in the Monastic strike of 1089, when the monks of St. Augustine's conducted a protest sit-in in the Churchyard. Izaak Walton, author of "The Compleat Angler" was married here in 1626.

3 The Hospital of St. Mary of the Poor Priests

This extensive medieval range was a hospice for elderly, poor and infirm priests founded by Alexander of Gloucester about 1220, and endowed by Simon Langton, Archdeacon of Canterbury. It occupied the house of Adam of Charing, built by Lambin Frese, 'the Minter' before 1180. Much of the block was rebuilt during the 14th century, including the chapel and Master's block with its splendid window. Behind the brick façade at the south end the 14th century timber-framed service wing still survives. The central hall may be a survivor from an earlier building; it retains its traditional medieval screens passage. The building was given by Queen Elizabeth I to the city in 1575 for Canterbury's poor. It has been at various times a Poor House, Bluecoat School and a Health Clinic. It is at present being restored and opened up for a museum of Canterbury's heritage.



The Greyfriars

The Franciscans or Greyfriars came to Canterbury in 1224, two years before the death of St. Francis. They were granted a small island in the Stour, called Binnewith, and acquired the rest of their site over the next 50 years though they often fell out with the city over jealously guarded rights of way.

4 Franciscan Bridge

In 1267 they were given a piece of land in Stour Street to form an entrance to their Friary. The licence to build the present bridge was granted in 1309, "for the benefit of persons wishing to attend service in the church, the bridge to be built so as to allow a clear passage for boats underneath". The small stone arch remains from the original bridge, the larger one being demolished in 1589 and subsequently rebuilt.

5 The Dormitory

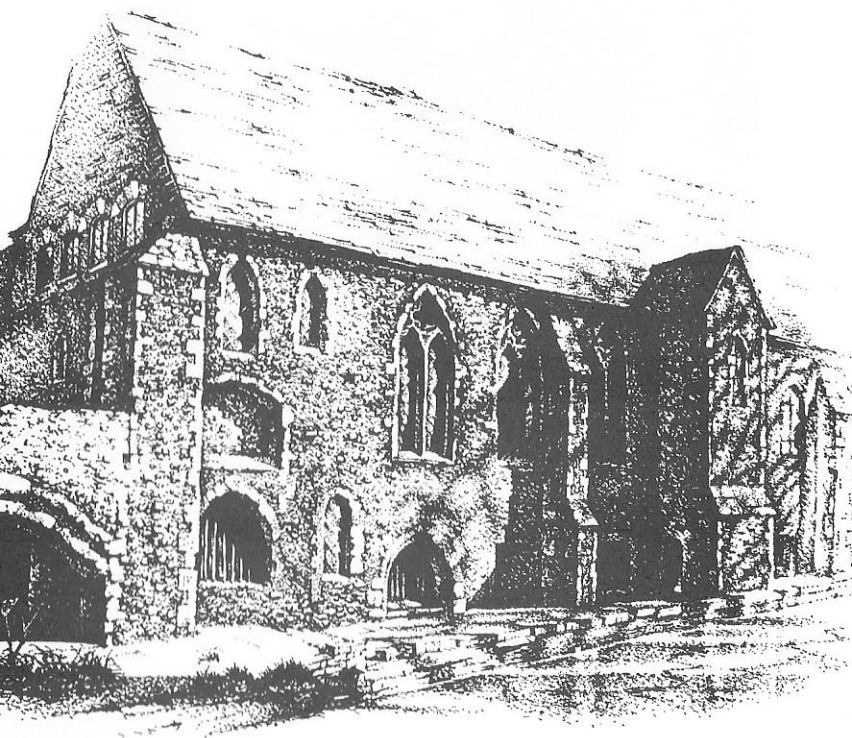
The one remaining building was evidently a Dormitory block, built on arches over the river c. 1267. The half buried columns have a Roman appearance and may be from an earlier building in this area. There is a hatch in the floor for drawing water up into the building. Many leading Canterbury citizens were buried in the Friary Church which lay to the west of the Dormitory. The Friary was dissolved in 1538 when it passed into private hands, becoming the home of the Lovelace family ("Stone walls do not a prison make . . ."), in 1565. During the Napoleonic Wars it was converted into a prison for French captives.

The Blackfriars

The Dominicans or Blackfriars first came to Canterbury in 1221, though their Priory was not begun before 1236. Henry III was the principal patron for the construction of their church and conventual buildings, of which two remain. Though they often upset the city by their extensive acquisitions of land they were generally popular and enjoyed the patronage of many important people. At the Dissolution the Priory became a private residence, remaining remarkably intact until the early 19th century.

15 The Dominican Guest House

The simple Dominican Guest House on the west bank is of 13th century date, probably c. 1240-50. It originally stood on a small island but the far branch was later filled in. The flint building has few original features of note, though it does preserve a fine medieval roof and an early post-reformation chimney at its far end. It was originally connected to the opposite bank by a narrow three arched bridge. In the reign of Charles II the building became the Guildhall for the city's weavers.



13 *The Blackfriars Refectory*

The Refectory or Dining Hall stands above a crypt and is built of flint with stone dressings. The most notable exterior feature is the projecting bay that formerly contained a stair and reading pulpit for a friar to read from scripture or holy books whilst the others ate in silence. The window tracery is of an early type, the building dating from the 1240's. At the northern end is a modern stair on the site of the medieval kitchen. At the southern end (on the site of the front of the church) stands a 17th century building, once a non-conformist chapel. The crypt has a fine 16th century brick vault, while the Refectory above has a fine medieval timber waggon roof.

14 *Abbot's Mill*

Mills have stood here for over a thousand years, and have caused the abrupt change in the river level at this point. The main mill belonged to the Abbey of St. Augustine and was known for centuries as the Abbot's Mill. In 1257 it was attacked by the rioting mob of Canterbury citizens who were contesting certain rights of jurisdiction with the monks. At the Dissolution of the Abbey in the 16th century the mill passed into the hands of Henry VIII and was later purchased by the city. At the end of the 18th century John Smeaton (who also designed the Eddystone Lighthouse), built a huge mill some 100 ft. high which was for many years a notable feature of the Canterbury sky-line. It was destroyed by a spectacular fire in 1933.



6 *The Hospital of St. Thomas the Martyr upon Eastbridge*

This pilgrim hospice was founded by William FitzOdbold and was in existence by 1180, just ten years after the murder of St. Thomas. It served poor pilgrims as well as the infirm, travellers on their way to Rome and lying-in women. After the Reformation the hospital became a home for old people which it remains to this day. The buildings are in two parts, the 12th century block with its entrance hall, vaulted undercroft, upper refectory hall and chapel, and the block over the river, built or remodelled by Archbishop Juxon, 1660-3. The pilgrims slept in the dark, damp undercroft, which has one of the finest medieval interiors in Canterbury. In the hall above are crudely carved capitals and a large Doom, or Christ in Majesty, painted about the year 1200. The chapel has fine 14th century windows over the street and a complicated internal bell framing within the roof. The 17th century block over the river is most picturesque, and the great timbers underneath may have survived from the previous building that was attached to this side of the bridge. A date on the central bridge buttress records an 18th century repair.



11 *The Alchemist's Tower*

This small castellated tower at the water's edge is an 18th century folly. It has acquired the name of the Alchemist's Tower out of some fancy that it was connected with those early scientists famous for their attempts to turn base metals into gold. In fact the tower forms part of a cemetery chapel or store house for the adjoining churchyard of All Saints which survives as a pleasant open space behind the Gas showrooms.

12 *The Forge*

The old forge, dating from 1617, was formerly part of an extensive range of early industrial buildings fronting on to the river. It has a brick and timber structure with its date picked out in grey bricks on its southern face. The timber upper floors are faced with Kentish weatherboarding, a popular feature of many Canterbury buildings. Until recently the forge was the principal repairshop for the famous stained glass of Canterbury Cathedral. In the 19th century the building had two large jettied gables. There are plans to rebuild and convert it.



8 *The King's Bridge*

This ancient two arched bridge was one of the formative factors in the shaping of Canterbury's street system. It certainly existed in the 12th century and probably represents the main river crossing point from earliest Saxon times. It is properly called the Eastbridge, but for centuries it has been called the King's Bridge, either due to its proximity to the King's Mill or because the main street, which it carries, was known for over a thousand years as the King's Street. The bridge was widened towards the Weavers in 1769 for the greater convenience of travellers and pedestrians. The second arch is completely encased in adjoining buildings, the mill to the north and the Eastbridge Hospital to the south. It is probably the oldest road bridge still in use in England.

9 *The Old Weavers' Houses*

The Old Weavers' Houses were originally a large Kentish hall house built some time during the 12th century. The building flanked the street with a double-storied block either side of a tall open hall. Much of the internal structure of this date can still be seen. Some time in the second half of the 16th century the building was converted into a fully two-storied block, gables added to the original roof and an extension built along the river. The jewellery shop at the far end became a separate property about 1600, when it was given its present façade and gable. It is highly likely that the 16th century transformation was connected with the influx of the thousands of Protestants from northern France and Flanders from the 1560s. They were generally known as Huguenots or Walloons and many of them were weavers by profession. They were responsible for the revival of the weaving trade that had been the basic industry of medieval Canterbury. By 1600 some two thousand looms were at work in the city, mostly in private houses. The 17th century saw the introduction of silk weaving into Canterbury, and the city became famous for its damasks and muslins. The industry continued into the 18th century but was finally killed off by a combination of the Napoleonic Wars, cheap silk from India, and the Industrial Revolution that favoured the Midlands and the North with their fast flowing streams that could operate the new water-powered machines.

10 *The Ducking Stool*

Ducking was a popular form of punishment for petty crimes in the 16th and 17th centuries. This is a replica of an ancient ducking stool, similar to one still extant at Fordwich, a few miles downstream. This form of punishment was usually for minor misdemeanors, being both cheap to operate and a public attraction. Its association with witchcraft cannot be justified by surviving legal evidence.

7 *The King's Mill, 24 High Street*

The lower part of this substantial Georgian house contains considerable remains of the medieval King's Mill, built or rebuilt by King Stephen 1124-53. Some of the profit from this mill was granted to Rohesia, sister of St. Thomas of Canterbury, by Henry II as part of his expiation for the Martyr's death. The mill caused considerable interruption to the flow of the river, which frequently flooded the street, and was finally demolished in 1800. The tail race can still be seen under the bridge.

Text by Dr. Francis Woodman. Map and illustrations by Christine Murphy, Canterbury College of Art. Produced by Canterbury Urban Studies Centre © 1981. Revised © 1993.

The Canterbury Urban Studies Centre is a registered educational charity. Other publications—Trails: 1 City Walls and Gates 2 Pilgrimage to the Cathedral 3 The Precincts of Canterbury Cathedral, The High Street Doodle Sheets and postcards. Also recommended Stour Valley Walks by the Stour Valley Society. Visit The Canterbury Centre, just off Palace Street, which houses exhibitions about the city's past, present and future, a resource collection for local and environmental studies and a cafe. The Canterbury Centre is a converted medieval church and home of the urban studies centre.