



Thursday 21 May @ 7.30pm

'A Gateway County'

Bridge Village Hall

Migrants in 15th century Canterbury



A skilful 15th Century Hatmaker

Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh will talk about the arrival of migrants from Europe in 15th century Kent.

Unlike the following century, these were economic migrants who sought opportunities to live and work in a wide range of trades in their new home.

This talk will explore what is known about these people, their numbers, their origins and their trades.

Admission £4 (including refreshments)

A public lecture by Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh, lecturer in Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent.

Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh is a lecturer in Medieval and Early Modern Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University and the University of Kent. She is co-director of the Centre for Kent History and Heritage, for which she writes an acclaimed weekly blog and organises the annual History Weekends. She has contributed to numerous local history publications including editing two volumes in the Kent History Project: Early Medieval Kent, 800-1220 (2016) and Later Medieval Kent, 1220-1540 (2010) and Maritime Kent through the Ages (2020).

Currently, migration remains high on the political agenda but this is not a new phenomenon and the 15th century witnessed considerable movements of people, goods and ideas. Trade was a significant factor concerning who crossed the seas to Canterbury, and Kent more broadly, but it was not the only factor. Consequently, we'll meet a range of artisans and traders who came to late medieval Canterbury, setting the arrival of such aliens in a regional context.

Dr Sheila Sweetinburgh is an Associate Lecturer in Medieval & Early Modern Studies in the School of English of the University of Kent, in Canterbury, England.

After a career in agriculture, she came to the University of Kent to study as an undergraduate and postgraduate where I developed a burgeoning interest in social and cultural medieval history. Using the extensive and high quality documentary sources that survive for the Cinque Ports, Canterbury and several other towns in Kent, as well as materials for the countryside, she has published numerous articles and several books on medieval society. These deal thematically with a wide range of issues from

charity and the use of material culture to institutional and personal identity.

r Sheila Sweetinburgh's lecture, "**A Gateway County: Migrants in 15th-Century Canterbury and Kent**," explores the historical movement of people, goods, and ideas in late medieval Kent. As a specialist in medieval social history, Dr Sweetinburgh uses this talk to highlight how trade and social factors—rather than just religious ones—drew various "aliens" to the region during a period of significant economic change. [1, 2]

Lecture Overview

The lecture focuses on the 15th century, a time when migration was a key driver of local development. Key themes include: [1]

- **Diverse Migrants:** The arrival of specialist craftsmen and traders, such as glasswrights, painters, and innovative beer brewers who introduced hopped beer to a region previously accustomed to traditional ale.
- **Economic Contributions:** How these "aliens" were valued by local authorities as productive taxpayers and skilled workers.
- **Social Integration:** Unlike the violent anti-immigrant outbursts seen in London during the late 15th century, Kent and Canterbury saw relatively peaceful coexistence, likely due to a lack of isolated ethnic enclaves.