



Margate  
Civic  
Society

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE NO. 411

***Margate Civic Society is a Founder  
Member of Civic Voice***

## CHAIR'S REPORT

*Dear Members*

How are you all?

The world continues to be a very troublesome place, but hopefully this edition will give you some respite and enjoyment.

I hope that most of you are now all managing to stay well and safe and our best wishes go to anyone who is suffering from any health issues currently, caring for a loved one or has been recently bereaved. As sadly, some of our more senior Members are now unable to attend our meetings, due to poor health, I should, like to give a special mention to our nonagenarian Members: President, Ralph Handscomb and Vera Jenkins who is our most senior Member. Ralph will be celebrating his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday in July. We wish you a very Happy Birthday Ralph!

Former Secretary: Geoff Orton is also now experiencing health concerns, so I would like to take this opportunity to send our very best wishes to him and hope that he will be able to attend one of our future meetings, when health permits.

I was so pleased to see longstanding Member Pam Piggott attend our Town Pride Awards' evening and the June meeting. She gave me an update on her husband, Fred, who has been cared for in Shottendane Nursing Home, soon to be transferred. Despite this, Fred looks forward to hearing what is written in our newsletters. On behalf of the Committee, I should like to send our very best wishes and rest assured we have not forgotten you Fred and I hope that Pam will be able to attend another one of our meetings soon!

If you would like a mention in the Autumn Edition, or would like another Member included, please contact me.

**In Memoriam:** I have been Chair of our Society for 13 years and one of the sadder aspects is the realisation that many senior members are now becoming infirmed with four others sadly passing away since the spring newsletter was published.

**Dave Morrish:** I was saddened to hear of the passing of Dave, who died on 27 March. He had managed to attend a meeting, when he was exceedingly ill and little did, I realise, that would be the last time I would see him. Geoff Orton, who knew David well, has written a moving tribute to him, further on in this newsletter.

**Frank Thorley** who was a Life Member, sadly passed away on 22 March, aged 87. He was the founder of Thorley Taverns. Thorley Taverns began in 1971 when Frank Thorley bought his first pub, 'The Angel', in the City of London. Frank then bought four further pubs in London before purchasing his first outlet in Thanet in 1975, 'The Charles Dickens' in Broadstairs.

The Thorley family had regular holidays to Thanet, resulting in Frank's love of the area and his permanent move to Broadstairs in 1977. Thorley Taverns continued to grow throughout the 80s and 90s - with venues including the legendary Frank's nightclub in Cliftonville - with the business successfully operating its London

and coastal sites from their Broadstairs base. Thorley Taverns sold their last London pub, The Aldgate Exchange, in late 2013.

As well as running the Thanet pubs, Frank was a champion of local charities and organisations including Oasis Domestic Abuse Service and Ramsgate Boxing Club. He was also one of the organisers of the annual Thanet boxing gala which raised thousands for local charities including Oasis, Pilgrims Hospices, Yoakley Homes and Shelter Box.

**Leo Gair:** At the end of a recent meeting, I was informed that Leo, another long-standing Member had also sadly passed away. We had not seen him for some time, but our thoughts are with his family and friends.

**Ken Gadd** was another long-standing Member who sadly passed away most recently. Ken used to assist with delivery newsletters. We send our condolences and best wishes to his wife, Pam and family.

Margate Civic Society sends heartfelt condolences to all family and close friends of these Members, who have been touched by sadness.

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**Membership:** A warm welcome to our new Member: Jade Barrington, who we look forward to seeing at our meetings.

You will see on page 13 that our Membership Secretary, Mike Wilton has explained the need to increase subscription fees this October, which is the first time we have done this for several years. Thank you to those who supported us by renewing their annual Membership this year and to those Life Members who have made donations, which is very gratifying. By giving talks voluntarily, donating raffle prizes, purchasing raffle tickets, refreshments and merchandise, this enables us to make a small profit. All help is most appreciated, especially in these rather challenging times!

**Lecture Evenings:** As you are aware, I always endeavour to organise a diverse programme of lectures, with something hopefully appealing to all Members' tastes, without breaking the budget!

Our new venue is a popular choice, with excellent facilities, enabling us to sell refreshments (including Diane's delicious home-made cake) at reasonable prices which adds to the enjoyment of the evening. There is also greater parking provision, with well-lit user-friendly access and heating, which obviously will be extremely welcome during the colder months. I was delighted that long-standing Member and friend, Iris Johnston, gave a fascinating talk at our last meeting in June. It was a very successful evening with a friendly, cheerful, informal atmosphere. See below: *(left to right)*: photographs of Iris in action, taking a break having a much-deserved cup of tea and discussing her memorabilia with Vice President James Brazier.



The summer meetings are also proving very popular, with the lighter, brighter evenings, so this format is certainly the way forward.

It is our intention that these meetings will continue to be inclusive, welcoming, comfortable and friendly, so I sincerely hope that more of you will wish to come along this year and meet your fellow Members, whilst also showing your support.

You will see overleaf; the remaining **2023 Programme** is included to ensure you make a note of the meeting dates. I shall be planning next year's programme very soon, aiming to book speakers with local knowledge. Should you wish to join next year's schedule of speakers, please do not hesitate to let me know.

**Blue Plaque Projects:** The two Mikes (Wilton and Thompson) have continued to work on this worthwhile project - details of which are revealed in this edition!

**Colour Newsletter:** How time flies! Can you believe that this is the eleventh quarterly newsletter edition for which Sally has been Editor with the Editorial Team: Mike Wilton, Mike Thompson and myself? Under this new regime: editions have included contributions from several of our Members, which have made very enjoyable reading. This has received a very positive response and we would, therefore, repeat our request that you please continue to give your support and remember that you are most welcome to contribute to forthcoming editions by forwarding articles, photographs, postcards, life stories, news of events, book reviews, poems, etc. I hope that you will enjoy reading your new-look Summer Edition.

As always, we would welcome your feedback regarding this issue - it is always good to hear from you!

**Historical Walks:** Vice-President, Robin Colyer's walks are continuing to be very popular, enjoyable and informative, whilst also raising funds. In addition to this they are excellent value for money, lasting approximately 90 minutes with a nominal donation requested of £5.00 minimum per person, which goes to our Society. The remaining walks planned for this year are given below: -

**Saturday 16 September:** 'West of the Brooks Walk' - a special walk as part of the Heritage Open Days looking at the development of Westbrook and Hartsdown Park.

**Saturday 28 October:** 'Cliftonville Walk' - discovering the history of a Victorian seaside suburb which was developed for more genteel holiday makers.

All walks start at **14:00** at the Droit House on the Harbour Arm (except for 'West of the Brooks' which starts at the railway station). These walks will be promoted via our website, social media and various online tourism sites. Robin is also willing to organise private walks, so should you have any enquiries: you can contact him on his mobile: **07878 537 448**.

## **Community News**

**The Margate School:** I was delighted at the recent news that, following the sale of the former Woolworths' building, their future has now been secured. See Geoff Orton's article in your newsletter. Should you wish to find out more see [www.themargateschool.com](http://www.themargateschool.com)



**Cliftonville Farmers' Market:** Cliftonville Farmers' Market was established in 2001 by the Cliftonville Residents Association. It is run entirely by volunteers who give their time freely and it is self-funded. A reminder that these very successful markets are held on the **last Sunday of each month from 1000-1300 hrs**, on the Walpole Bay Lawns, behind the Walpole Bay Hotel, Fifth Avenue, Cliftonville, CT9 3HF. Admission is free.

June Chadband, who is the Manager, has kindly offered us a table at one of the markets, which will enable us to sell merchandise and promote our Society. Once a date has been confirmed, you will be updated, to enable you to come along and give your support.

**Wilderness-to-Wonderland:** Awarded a Highly Commended certificate at last year's Town Pride Awards, this successful community project is expanding and the founder, Rory Waitt has been very proactive sourcing funding in order to make this happen.

Further on in your newsletter, you will see Rory's report.

**GRASS Cliftonville CIC - Oval Bandstand & Lawns:** Congratulations to Simon Bell and Stephen darren who were nominated by Cllr Lesley Game, the Chairman of Kent County Council, to attend the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace as part of King Charles' coronation celebrations!

Now that summer is here at last, you will be spoilt for choice with so many events and activities being organised. To see the latest news of what is planned see their website: [www.theovalbandstand.co.uk](http://www.theovalbandstand.co.uk) or email them at [info@theovalbandstand.co.uk](mailto:info@theovalbandstand.co.uk)

### **TOWN PRIDE AWARDS 2023**

On 18 May I welcomed attendees to our 40<sup>th</sup> Town Pride Awards celebratory event, which is our Society's 'jewel in the crown'. The evening commenced by me explaining the format of the evening for those who had not attended previously, together with the history of our Society and our origins.

#### **To remind you of our history:**

The comprehensive redevelopment of historic but rundown town centres was all the rage amongst planning officials and local councillors in the 1960s. In response to this, the Margate Society (as it was then named) was founded on 26 November 1968 when several passionate individuals decided to get together, asking for interested people to join them in proposing conservation areas for the town and in putting forward constructive criticism of the local development plan.

In recent years, in order to attract and maintain membership, we have modernised the Society but have continued to maintain those traditional core values.

On 1 November 1983, the Inaugural Awards were organised, and this tradition has been upheld, during which time the Society has asked its members to nominate projects within the boundaries of the former Margate Borough area covering Cliftonville, Margate, Westbrook, Westgate-on-Sea, Birchington, Acol, St Nicholas-at-Wade and Sarre, that they feel has in the past year enhanced the built environment in our area. Over the years, proposals have ranged from private residences to commercial premises, magnificent restorations to new developments, simple projects, such as an attractive set of railings, green spaces and a community sign to the more complex: past winners being the Town Hall Buildings, Westgate-on-sea (2010), Turner Contemporary & the New Life Family Church Hall (2011), The Sands Hotel and the impressive Margate Flood & Coastal Protection Project also known as '[Margate Steps](#)' (both of which won Plaques in 2014), the Crescent Victoria Hotel, Cliftonville (2015), the Grade II\* listed Scenic Railway (winner in 2016), and quirky commercial properties: The Old Town T-Stall (2013) and the historic Old Kent Market (that won in 2017). In our 50<sup>th</sup> year (2018), we awarded two plaques for the late Victorian property 12 Arthur Road, Cliftonville & the Cinque Ports Public House that is situated on Margate seafront. In 2019, 'Brompton Villas', Westgate Bay Avenue, Westgate-on-Sea was our winner and in 2021, due to Covid restrictions, we celebrated in a very low-key way with two Plaques being awarded for 2020 on separate occasions last year, to The Margate Caves Visitor Centre and Westbrook House, 145 Canterbury Road, Westbrook. Last year's winner was the new development: 20 Palm Bay Avenue, Cliftonville.

In the past, Town Shame awards were also given but since I have organised this event over the past thirteen years, it was agreed that on this occasion, we focus on the positive rather than the negative, which often gets publicity. Any concerns are, however, referred to the appropriate agencies when necessary.

This year we had a panel of four judges who viewed all the Town Pride proposals during February, the criteria being: -

- ❖ **Completion at time of judging**
- ❖ **Enhancing the built environment**
- ❖ **Using quality materials**
- ❖ **Aesthetically pleasing to the eye**
- ❖ **Restoring pride to a local community**
- ❖ **Contributing to the community amenity**



Amazingly, despite the uncertainty nationally and indeed locally, we received a total of seven nominations this year (one of which consisted of three projects), all submitted by Members, consisting of a very diverse mix: six for Margate, and one for Cliftonville - all unique in their own way, as follows: -

- 85 Dane Road, Margate (erection of two x three-bedroom storey dwellings following the demolition of existing offices).
- 50 Hawley Square, Margate (renovation of fire-damaged building)
- 28 Ethelbert Crescent, Cliftonville, Margate (new development)
- Fort Road Hotel, 18 Fort Road, Margate (full restoration)
- Olimpia Bakery, 67 High Street, Margate (renovation)
- Former Thanet Press, Union Crescent, Margate (restoration of former print works to a huge multi-purpose development, comprising residential and artists' studios).
- 1 Union Crescent and 1 and 2 Cecil Street, Margate (restoration, including the former Constitutional Club)

Members may recall that two of these: namely the former Thanet Press building in Union Crescent and 85 Dane Road, were nominated last year but as they were not completed at the time of judging, it was agreed for these to be carried over to this year.

### **TOWN PRIDE WINNERS 2023**

This year, due to the exceptionally high standard, we decided to award a total of five Certificates to those we considered to be 'Highly Commended' - details as follows: -

#### **Olimpia Bakery, 67 High Street, Margate**

**(In recognition of making a major contribution to the regeneration of Margate High Street)**

Over the past few years, occasionally worthy commercial premises have been nominated and this one is no exception. Established in 2022, this is a family-run Greek bakery in the heart of Margate, situated a five-minute

#### **Comments:**

This corner-sited commercial property so prominently situated in the centre of Margate has been beautifully renovated externally. The standard of the decoration and fitting out internally is of the highest quality with part tiled walls, well-lit display cabinets and an abundance of seating areas. It features a fully functioning in-house bakery with an incredible range of cakes and both sweet and savoury pastries together with hot and cold drinks. It really is a very welcome addition to Margate High Street and the owners are to be applauded for making such a confident investment locally in both financial and staffing terms. With such a welcoming atmosphere and excellent customer service, this is indeed an enormous asset to Margate and is certainly worth a visit!



*(Left) A very proud Artan Salijasi receiving his award with Pamela and Ermal Ismaili and (right) Directors: Artan Salijasi and Ermal Ismaili and family*

## **85 Dane Road, Margate**

**(In recognition of innovative design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of our area)**

This development has been undertaken by the second generation of a family business, which made it more personal and meaningful. A former builder's yard has been redeveloped in an innovative and most attractive way to provide residential accommodation. This has been achieved with a clever design which mirrors the adjacent properties having a lower level with steps up to the upper levels. This provides for separate accommodation at ground floor level in addition to that at the upper level. The steps to the upper levels are flanked by railings in an appropriate style and the parapet roof, face brickwork and windows all complement the external appearance extremely well.



*(Left-right) Stephen Bedingfield, Director of G & W Gardner Building & Decorating Contractors, receiving the award Pamela with Stephen Bedingfield and Stephen Bedingfield, Julie Bedingfield and James Bedingfield.*

## **50 Hawley Square History**

**(In recognition of innovative, sensitive and eye-catching design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of Margate)**

Hawley Square, which was built in 1762, was the first Georgian Square in Margate to include an enclosed pleasure ground. It owes its name to Sir Henry Hawley (1745-1826) who was created the first Baronet of Leybourne College near Maidstone in 1795 (The Peerage) and who owned the field on which the square was built. In 1800, the Square comprised of 'an entire range of genteel houses, from one end of it to the other, most of which commanded a fine and extensive prospect of the sea'.



## **Comments**

This house was built in 1780. Since this Grade II listed property caught fire in May 2008, the building has been completely rebuilt to provide nine exclusive apartments, including a penthouse. The original façade has been beautifully restored retaining all the original features, whilst the modern external rear elevation allows for the inclusion of balconies to some of the apartments.

This development has indeed risen like a phoenix from the ashes and the perfectly restored front elevation does, once again, fit in beautifully, overlooking as it does, the magnificent Georgian Hawley Square.



*Pamela with Scott Rigden of Urban Surveying & Design Ltd, receiving the award, on behalf of Kim Hawkins*

## **28 Ethelbert Crescent, Cliftonville - Background of Project**

**(In recognition of innovative, sensitive and eye-catching design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of our area)**

Kent County Council (KCC) launched its 'No Use Empty' initiative in 2005 in collaboration with Kent's district councils. The primary aim of the initiative is to improve the physical urban environment in Kent by bringing empty properties back into use as good quality homes and to raise awareness of the problems empty properties can cause to local communities. The initiative provides guidance and financial support to all of Kent's district councils. Since then, the 'Owner Occupier Loan' initiative has been developed by Thanet District Council in partnership with Kent County Council's 'No Use Empty Team' to offer an interest free loan of up to a maximum of £20,000 to individual(s) who have purchased an empty home (which has been vacant for more than six months), within the Wards of Margate Central and Cliftonville West, in order to assist with their refurbishment costs. The property will need to be occupied by them on completion of works for a minimum of five years.

'No Use Empty' teamed up with GPML Property Services Limited to help bring this Thanet property back into use. It had been vacant for a long period of time and was an eye sore to the community. Since acquiring the property, GPML has removed a space which was known for anti-social behaviour and vandalism, which is an extremely positive outcome.

## **Comments:**

This long-term empty property has been subjected to an extensive and complete rebuild above the original ground floor element creating five two-bedroom apartments. The first, second and third floor levels have been added in a style beautifully replicating the neighbouring properties within the terrace. Attention to detail is



highly commendable with decorative balcony panels and sash windows set within decorative reveals and arches. The development provides completion of this most impressive terrace on a grand scale.

Congratulations to all agencies involved in this excellent project!



*(Left-right) Pamela with Lee John Phelps (Director of GPML Property Services) receiving his Award and Lee sharing a joke with Steve (also involved in the project)*

### **Fort Road Hotel, 18 Fort Road, Margate**

**(In recognition of innovative and sensitive design, making a major contribution to the regeneration of Margate seafront)**

### **History**

This building (previously the Fort Castle Public House) is one of the last surviving buildings in the area today that the artist JMW Turner would recognise. Turner spent 15 years 'weekending' in Margate with Sophia Booth (whose house was opposite) and, as a noted drinker, it seems inconceivable that he did not visit the establishment. The property is listed on maps of Margate going back to 1821, although it may be older. This sadly closed around 1990, to be turned into a squat and was then left to decay.

In October 2009, Thanet District Council agreed to [put the property on the open market](#) after twenty two years of it being empty. The hotel was compulsory purchased by the authority in May 2010 when initial plans for the site were for a boutique hotel.

In 2011, more than twenty informal enquiries from developers, hotel owners and architects were made to Thanet District Council in relation to the property. A planning application to turn it from bedsits to a hotel was granted with the aim of linking its regeneration to Turner Contemporary.

TDC also installed a neon advertisement on the roof proclaiming 'Iconic Site' and said plans were for it to be turned into: "a small, twenty-first century character hotel with up to twelve rooms and a restaurant, which would help address the shortfall of quality hotel accommodation in Margate." But although a formal advertisement was published in October 2011 and thirty application packs for the project were sent out, none were returned to the council.

Fast forward a few years and the artist and author Tom Gidley and Frieze co-founder Matthew Slotover walked past a 'for-sale' sign and saw possibility. After enlisting the help of Matthew Slotover's friend, Gabriel Chipperfield - a designer and developer, and son of the architect David Chipperfield - they found themselves buying the near-derelict hotel at auction and going in as equal partners, with the structural restoration led by Fleet Architects. The result was an elegant, arty, stylish, and sophisticated transformation!



## Comments:

This property had fallen into a most serious state of disrepair. Most of the roof tiles were missing, and water had been pouring through the building for many years. This full restoration has been truly outstanding. Not only has this restoration eliminated the previous eyesore but the use as a hotel has been retained, which is highly commendable and good news indeed for the promotion of local tourism.

All original details have been faithfully retained or replicated, including the bays and sash windows. A fifth floor has been incorporated at the upper level and a total of fourteen guest rooms are now on offer all individually designed and equipped.

A truly welcome addition to the growing economy within our seaside town. Our Congratulations to all concerned!



*(Left-right) Tom Fogg (General Manager of the Fort Hotel) with Graham Kinnear (Director of County Construction (Kent) Ltd holding the award and Pamela with Tom Fogg.*

## **TOWN PRIDE PLAQUE & FRAMED CERTIFICATE**

We were delighted to award this year's greatly deserved Town Pride Plaque and framed certificate to Tracey Emin for her four Margate restoration projects: **Thanet Press, Union Crescent together with 1 Union Crescent and 1 & 2 Cecil Street.**

**(In recognition of an outstanding, sympathetic and eye-catching restoration project, making a positive contribution to the regeneration of Margate)**

Regrettably, Tracey was unable to be with us that evening, due to her being in Rome, where she had been installing an art exhibition. Alternative arrangements to present her award will hopefully be made over the coming weeks.

As with other historic buildings that have been nominated over the years, I enjoyed researching the following history, which was fascinating, entwining many famous companies.

## **History of Margate Constitutional Club**

The Margate Constitutional Club was opened at 2 Cecil Street on 29 January 1895 by James Lawther MP. The club's foundations were set on 24 May 1893 when the first committee meeting was held in the Britannia Hotel Margate, raising the then substantial sum of £2,000, they spent 18 months finding the right place and Cecil Square became its home! This was for men only, but women were generously allowed to join in 1969! It celebrated its Centenary in 1995 with Ex-Mayor Tony Regan amongst others having a drink on its birthday.

Margate Constitutional Club closed in 2010 after 115 years. To safeguard against damage by water penetration, the Club's War Memorial tablet listing the names of 128 of its Club members, who served their King and Country in the Great War, was moved to the Old Town Hall to enable it to be mounted on an interior wall for display. Eight of the 128 names listed are marked as having 'made the supreme sacrifice'. This is an important memorial that was moved to the Old Town Hall for safe keeping.

## The Fascinating History of Thanet Press

In 1887, Frederick J Bobby, who had been running a small store in Bedford, moved to Margate and took over the Smeeds store, on the junction of Margate High Street and Cecil Square. With business booming, over the next few years, Bobby's acquired neighbouring premises to expand the business. In 1907, he bought a nearby stationers, and print works in Well-close Square.

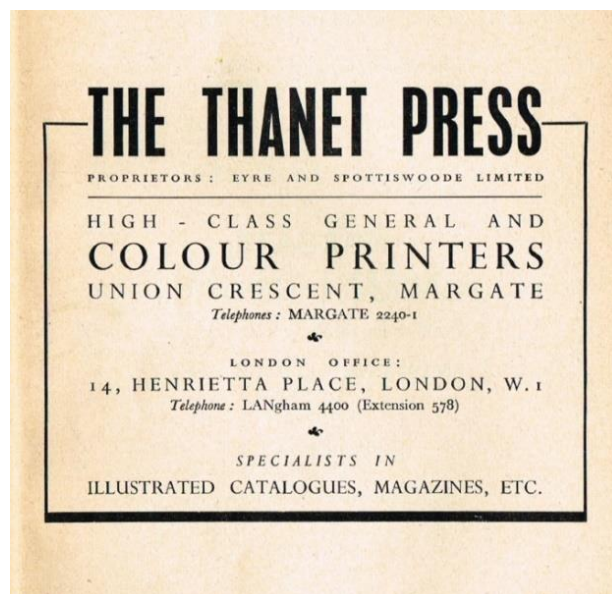
In 1909, Bobby demolished the old Smeed's building, and the other shops he had acquired, to build Margate's first department store, which would trade until 1972. In 1913, the Bobby's printworks were moved from Well-close Square to a new, purpose-built factory in Union Crescent. Next door was Bobby's furniture factory and a trade showroom, and behind the works was Margate's old Theatre Royal, which Bobby & Co used as a warehouse. The 1920s and 1930s were good years for Bobby & Co, and they employed famous commercial artist F Gregory Brown, to design posters for the stores, as they expanded to other seaside towns. Bobby & Co's presses worked until the end of the Second World War, printing material for the department store chain as well as for other commercial clients.

**Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited** were a London-based printing firm, established in 1739 that was the King's Printer, and subsequently, after April 1929, a publisher of the same name. Prior to being incorporated; it once went by the name of Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co Ltd.

George Edward Eyre and Andrew Spottiswoode were also printers to the Queen's most excellent majesty for Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1845. Their sons subsequently ran the business. The firm was re-appointed King's Printer after the accession of King Edward VII in May 1901.

In 1947, publishers Eyre & Spottiswoode took over the former Bobby & Co works. Their three London printworks had all been bombed, leaving them with a three-metre-deep pool of lead in the basement, so they moved their letterpress works to three new sites - Portsmouth, Chiswick and Margate and Eyre & Spottiswoode moved their printing to Margate, taking over the printshop and warehouses on Union Crescent that had previously belonged to department store Bobby & Co and renaming the site The Thanet Press.

Eyre & Spottiswoode's arrival led to a boom in the print industry. Established local companies like 'Cooper the Printer' and Lanes of Broadstairs were soon joined by dozens of small firms, offering specialised jobs like bookbinding.



*Advertisement for The Thanet Press*

From 1953 to 1962, they expanded the Thanet Press and added a range of new buildings, creating almost 4,500 square metres of floor space. By 1977, they had over 260 staff and were moving from traditional

letterpress to digital typesetting. They printed exam papers, guides to buildings owned by the Ministry of Works (now English Heritage), academic magazines and journals, the order of service for the Queen's Coronation and Prince Margaret's wedding programme and packaging for high-end brands like Wedgwood. It became part of Associated Book Publishers and merged with Methuen Publishing in the 1970s.

For 30 years, Christopher Bradshaw was chief designer for Eyre & Spottiswoode. Passionate about traditional skills and craftsmanship (he was a founder of the Printing Historical Society), he was also an early advocate of computer design. He wrote *Design* (1964), on the theory of design, and commissioned Michael Twyman's *Printing 1770-1970* (1970), which is still a definitive book about the print industry.



*Bobby & Co's Union Crescent works, depicted on a 1970s Eyre & Spottiswoode Christmas Card. The original print works were in the building to the left.*

The Thanet Press printed top-shelf magazines, exam papers, books, exhibition catalogues for organisations like the British Museum, The Beatles Monthly magazine, and journals for the British Medical association. At its peak they employed an estimated 2,500 people across the Isle of Thanet.

In the mid-1980s, the site was bought by games company Waddington - so Monopoly money, boards and boxes were also made in Margate. The company, which employed 85 staff and had a turnover of £6.5m in 2009, cited a reduction in sales arising from intense competition in the UK print sector, which led to cashflow difficulties.

After concluding a review of its future, their bank accounts were frozen by Barclays and an Insolvency practitioner was appointed to the business after it was left unable to pay suppliers or staff. A meeting was held on 12 April at Holiday Inn Express, Manston, when it was expected that the company be placed into creditors' voluntary liquidation. This fell a day before a scheduled meeting at which the company was facing a winding-up petition issued by HMRC. "There is nothing further that the directors can add at this time, save to express their regret at being forced to take such action and to thank all staff, customers and suppliers for their commitment and support over the years," said the company in a statement. Thanet Press was [sold by previous owner The Baird Group](#) in March 2009. The business was acquired by Phillip Moore, owner of Kent-based print and publishing company Graham Cumming Group.

On Wednesday, 30 March, 2011, Tim Sheahan reported that 'Thanet Press, the Margate-based commercial printer, has ceased trading with all staff made redundant'.

Fast forward to 2016, when art dealer Jonathan Viner bought a 1960's warehouse in Margate and three years later, a section of this was purchased by Carl Freeman and transformed into an art gallery whilst another section was purchased by Tracey Emin for use as a sculpture and painting studio, living accommodation, pool and archive spaces.

### **Comments:**

This entire group of properties is now under single ownership and has been the subject of extensive conversion and refurbishment. The former Thanet Press buildings have been beautifully renovated and converted to include an Art Gallery and residential accommodation. The choice of materials has been exemplary, and they once again fit in with the street scene perfectly.

The three buildings fronting Cecil Street have all been treated to a complete external refurbishment. All original details have been faithfully retained or replicated including sash windows, porticos and doors.



Traditional lime mortar pointing has been used on all frontages and the buildings now complement the street scene beautifully.

At the end of the evening, congratulations were given to all our winners, and I thanked everyone who had been involved in this year's Awards, particularly **Croft Cast Signs** and my fellow Judges - namely: Mike Wilton (who also photographed the nominations, designed the certificates and prepared the digital presentation), Mike Thompson (for organising the plaque and for his technical judging input) and Sally Whitworth (our photographer on the night); also other Committee and Auxiliary Committee members: Anny Squires (social media), my husband, Ray for his usual support both behind the scenes and in front on this occasion, Diane Addison and Kate Wilson and Heather Wilton for organising the refreshments and raffle respectively, and Glen and Richard Clements for overseeing 'door duties' and Kathy Bailes, of the Isle of Thanet News, who as always, was very supportive.

Finally, thanks were also given to the Members who attended this evening, including several local Councillors who arrived after a Full Council meeting, all contributing to making it such a special occasion once again. I hope you will agree that this event has been a very successful celebration of the positive achievements in our area, of which we should be immensely proud.



Congratulations to all our winners!  
(Thanks to Sally Whitworth who took all the photographs on the night)

*Wishing you all a fantastic summer!*

*With my very best wishes*

*Pamela*

## REPORT FROM THE TREASURER

Dear Members

Regrettably, the Society has not fully recovered from the effects of the Covid lockdown, with our membership subscriptions around half of what they were a few years ago. We last increased the subscription fee for members receiving paper editions of the Newsletter in October 2018, and the fee for members receiving email editions has not been increased since October 2016, when it was put up by £1.

You will gather that this is leading up to an increase this year. Our constitution states:

*Subscriptions shall be due on 1st November or immediately after the AGM of each year and shall be at rates determined at the Annual General Meeting. Membership shall lapse if subscriptions are not paid three months after they are due.* In accordance with this, your committee will be proposing at the AGM on 5<sup>th</sup> October that the subscription fees for 2023/24 will be as follows:

	Individual	Joint	Junior (under 18)	Corporate
Paper Newsletter	£20	£25	£6	
Email Newsletter	£15	£21	£3	£30

We do appreciate that these are large increases at a time when any increase is unwelcome. However, they are the first for several years, they bring us more in line with other local Civic Societies and they will help protect the future of the Society. We do very much hope you will continue to support us.

Thank you and kind regards,

**Mike Wilton – Honorary Treasurer**

## LECTURE PROGRAMME JULY TO OCTOBER 2023

**Please note that all future meetings will now be held at the Holy Trinity Margate Hall, St Mary's Ave, Margate CT9 3TN starting at 1930 hrs. Refreshments, merchandise and raffle tickets will be on sale at all meetings. Raffle to be drawn at the end of each evening. Attendees are requested to be seated by 1920 hrs.**

### 6 July

**Guests: £3.50 nominal fee**

**Topic:** "The Changing Fortunes of the Cinque Ports"  
**Speaker:** James Dickinson (Historian)

August No meeting

### 7 September

**Guests: £3.50 nominal fee**

**Topic:** "Suffragettes and Suffragists"  
**Speaker:** Melanie Gibson-Barton (Historian)

5 October (Renewal of Subs Due)

**Guests: £4.50 nominal fee**

**Topic:** Annual General Meeting, followed by: -

**"Mr Billy Joel's "We Didn't Start The Fire" ... Explained!"** In September 1989, Billy Joel released a four-and-a-half-minute long song listing 118 historical events covering the first 40 years of his life from 1949. It was described by some as "Information overload". Steve has skilfully distilled this song into a 45 minute+ presentation enabling him to explain what the "Piano Man" was singing about, especially the American bits! Please note prior to refreshments and our raffle, there will be a collection for Cancer Research UK.

## WILDERNESS TO WONDERLAND

Rory Waitt, Chair

Wildernesstowonderland are proud to be able to give residents, visitors, and traders the opportunity to work together to provide community gardens to be enjoyed by all creatures great and small. Since covid the world has changed demanding us all to discover new ways to build communities to care for each other, the environment and promote inclusion and diversity. Margate is a Seaside town with rich heritage, dynamic volunteers, proud residents - and you've guessed it – a council that is strapped for cash.

Wildernesstowonderland have a workforce of dedicated volunteers worth £40,000pa, a two year reputation creating and maintaining community wonderlands and we have been well supported by Charities, Justgiving, Local Nurseries and Institutions to get this far.

Thanks to YOUR MOVE Charterhouse and THE BIKE SHED Westbrook we have at last secured our first two LOCAL SPONSORS which will make our goals achievable and sustainable. It is inspirational when the public show their support with kind words / Justgiving gifts and when Local Business value our contribution to the Margate's eclectic brand by Sponsoring our Civic Pride endeavours.



WILDERNESSTOWONDERLAND look forward to welcoming up to five more local sponsors to ensure our Community Gardens can be a sustained, sensational experience for visitors, residents and all creatures great and small.





## A SECOND BLUE PLAQUE FOR WESTGATE-ON-SEA by Mike Thompson



*From left (from L-R) Mike Wilton (MCS), Andrew Samuel, Cassandra Barnes, Mike Thompson (MCS), Rhys Thomas, Megan Smith and, right, the owners of the property with the blue plaque in place.*

Members of Margate Civic Society may recall that in the summer of 2022, we reported on the blue plaque dedicated to Louis Wain which had been erected at 29 Westgate Bay Avenue, a house occupied by him from 1906 until 1916.

Louis was famous for his drawings of cats depicted in humanised form, but he was not financially prudent, even omitting to protect his work by copyright so he was always short of money, and with five sisters and a mother to support, he was constantly chased by creditors. Sir William Ingram, the owner of the London Illustrated News befriended him and added immensely to his popularity by publishing examples of his work which had then become very popular with the general public.

With creditors constantly at his door, Sir William offered Louis and the family a move to the up-and-coming town of Westgate-on-Sea and to take up residence in one of three new properties he had purchased there (Louis was to eventually occupy all three of them in turn).

The first of these properties he occupied was number 16 Adrian Square, staying there from 1894 until 1895. This imposing and substantial property forms part of one of Westgate's most attractive squares and it is now divided into five apartments.

The owners, aware of the connection to Louis Wain and the fact that he once resided there, had noticed the plaque dedicated to Louis in Westgate Bay Avenue and thought it appropriate that a second plaque should be erected in his memory. Rhys Thomas, one of the flat owners contacted Margate Civic Society and a jointly funded project to produce and erect a plaque got underway.

Croft Cast Signs who produce the Society's plaques were commissioned and the result is now proudly on display.

Margate Civic Society was delighted to be approached by the residents of number 16 and would like to thank them all for their keen interest and financial support in the project with special thanks to Rhys for liaising with the Society on the residents' behalf.

Louis is now celebrated and remembered at two of the three properties he occupied in Westgate-on-Sea, leaving us wondering if there will eventually be a third plaque in his memory. Watch this space!

## GOOD NEWS FOR THE MARGATE SCHOOL

The Margate School building sold! The iconic former Woolworths building, that stood empty for eleven years and occupied by The Margate School since 2019, has been sold. The philanthropic owner, who wants to remain anonymous, has confirmed that the continued support for The Margate School is a priority. The new owner is a keen supporter of The Margate School since its inception. We are pleased that as a result we are now being offered a twenty-year lease on the building.



Uwe Derksen, Director of The Margate School, expressed his gratitude to the previous owners for their trust and support over the last few years and finally completing with the new owner the sale of the building with The Margate School at its heart.

He said: "The last few months have been somewhat of a rollercoaster and the sale of such a building is never straight forward. The positive outcome was only possible because not only did the seller and buyer support The Margate School but throughout the sales process all three parties were in close contact which made all the difference! On behalf of the School, I would like to express our appreciation and offer our thanks to both the new and old owner of this historically important building in Margate's High Street allowing our community and our neighbourhood to thrive".

Further the newly formed charity, The Margate School CIO, wholeheartedly expressed their support and thanks:

"The trustees of the new The Margate School Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) are delighted that the premises of The Margate School will be secured on a long lease. As well as providing a sustainable base for the School's vital educational and community focussed activities, it signals confidence and a strong long-term viability to both public and private funders for future investment." James Shea, Chair of Trustees, The Margate School CIO.

"This is an important and exciting development for The Margate School and supports its ambitions to make diverse contributions to the creative arts and cultural sectors in the region as well as in national and international contexts.

Linking in from the theme of the RSA Festival, which was live streamed to local members at The Margate School this weekend, What Can Go Right?, it is a positive journey ahead for the rest of the year and beyond.

Just recently we have signed a partnership agreement with Esä, l'École Supérieure d'Art Dunkerque-Tourcoing, which will be the basis for future education and research collaborations, residencies, exchange visits and projects.

Last week the Charity Commission approved the charity application for The Margate School CIO, set up to support The Margate School community by securing donations and charitable funds. Students are also looking forward to their end of year events and exhibitions: Enchanted Things, showcasing the work of the European Fine Art Masters from 1 to 9 July".



## A SHORT MARGATE WALK by Robin Colyer

Robin has written a short Margate walk especially for members of the Civic Society

### **Bankside**

Start the walk at the front of Turner Contemporary. The site of the gallery, which was founded in 2011, was once a collection of properties known as Bankside. Mrs Booth's home would have been in the centre of this area. The Ship Hotel and the Hotel Metropole stood on Bankside (see *photograph opposite*) and above them was Neptune Square. The area was demolished for road widening and other improvements



### **Fort Hill/Fort Road**



Proceed up the modern road towards the Winter Gardens. The fort stood on the clifftop overlooking Margate Harbour and was there to provide defence to the harbour and to shipping off the coast. It was an earthwork fortification with cannons. Munitions for the fort were once stored in the vestry of the ancient Parish Church of St John's for safety. By 1804 the resort was growing and it was suggested that a promenade should be provided so that visitors could avoid the bustle and smells of the Old Town and this was established at the Fort.

If you stop at the top of the hill you will find the rebuilt Fort Road Hotel which has recently been highly commended in our Town Pride Awards. The building dates from 1820 and was an eyesore for decades before the project that has transformed it back to being a quality hotel.

Turn into Fort Road which will take you towards the Old Town. On your left is the redevelopment scheme of the site of Ford Road Yard and below behind the site of the demolished Fountain Inn is Alkali Row. These properties were the site of a trade which produced kelp by burning seaweed. Kelp was used in glassmaking.

Across the road on the right is the former Fort Brewery Tap pub. Further down is the frontage of the Margate Ambulance Corps Dispensary.

### **Cobbs Bank**

This private bank was founded about 1785 by Margate's brewers, the Cobb family. The head of the family at the time was Francis "King" Cobb. They loaned money and held investments for local people and businesses and remained independent until 1891. They were taken over by Hoare & Co and then became part of Lloyds. The main branch was on the corner of Fort Road and King Street.

The Cobb family owned the properties on King Street that adjoined their brewery, which was situated between them and the present Police Station. King Cobb's fine town house is no 23 and first bank premises are next door.





Above - The Fountain Inn (left) Cobb's Brewery (right) and (below) the Francis Cobb blue plaque in King Street



### **Cobbs Brewery**

The brewery was a major employer in the town and operated until it was sold to Whitbread in 1968. The brewery buildings were sadly demolished in 1971 but the old offices survive and were restored as houses, Cobb Court. This development won one of the first awards that were presented by Margate Civic Society,

### **King Street Shops**

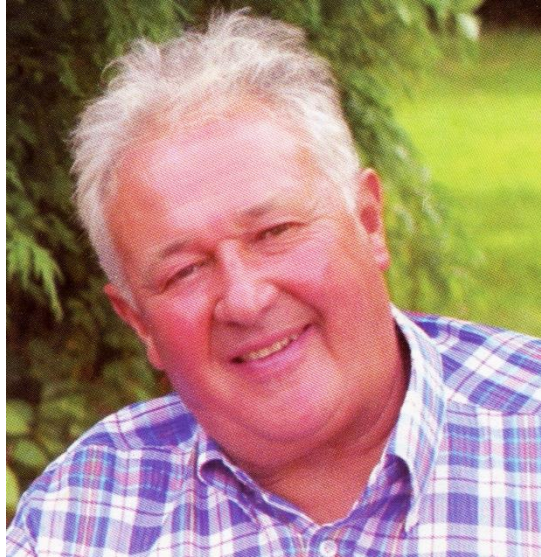
The street was once a thriving shopping area but went to decline in the latter decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The premises are again alive with antique shops and eating places. The origin shop fronts of H B Smith and T W Stigant have been uncovered and conserved. The walk ends here, where you can enjoy the cafés and small shops of the Old Town.

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### **CORRECTION**

In the last newsletter, the date given for the demolition of Holy Trinity Church was 1958. Further evidence has come to light which indicates the church was not demolished completely until the early 1960s.

**DAVID WILLIAM MORRISH**  
21 March 1945 to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2023



Members be saddened to have heard of the passing of Dave Morrish at home overlooking West Bay, after a long valiant struggle with a heart condition that only developed over the last couple of years.

Dave and his wife Pat arrived in Westgate some ten years ago from the Midlands and threw themselves into community life. Dave read rugby and some civil engineering at Leeds University and proceeded thence to the infant Telford Development Corporation and thereafter as a Borough and County engineer in Staffordshire as well as becoming a parish councillor. At the well-attended service at St Saviour's (Pat's Thanet Festival Choir doing us proud), Jonathan, his eldest son, suggested that Telford was where his father cut his traffic planning teeth (so might have much on his conscience in some eyes.)

It was Thanet's initial 12,000 house Local Plan that inspired Dave to become a founder member of the Westgate Local Plan Action Group where his professional expertise was highly valued. This led him on to becoming a founder Westgate Town Councillor, chairing the Environment sub-committee and setting up the original Neighbourhood Plan (which is now of course in need of a substantial rethink).

It was Dave's initiative which revived the Thanet Branch of Kent CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) which he chaired with a certain inimitable bluff earthiness. He took a keen interest in his adopted county and was very proud to have been elected as a trustee of the KCPRE, contributing his expertise to our wider concerns. I should like to think that Dave's spirit mentored our recent concerns over the Thanet North Link Road proposal - he was an 'established correspondent' with Kent County Council Highways!

Dave had been a keen Scouter in Staffordshire for most of his life and was delighted to be enrolled as a guide at Draper's given his interest in the 'craft' which trained canal builders which trained railway engineers. His enthusiasm was much appreciated by the Margate Civic Society members who essentially run the Mill (Robin Colyer, Steve Villet, Tim Keenan, Anny Squire). He had also been involved with the Westgate Conservation Area Advisory Group, giving talks to Westgate Heritage Centre on the sea defences and to The Margate School's Eco Conference on the George V Park underground drainage system.

And as if that wasn't enough, Dave also became expert on 'Banjo' Paterson ('Waltzing Matilda' fame) writing for the Westgate Creative Writing Group – he enjoyed a beer and banter in the Bake & Ale House and will be remembered as the most sociable and good-natured of fellows taken far too soon and held in great affection by us Southerners.

Our condolences to Pat, his three sons, and numerous grandchildren who have an outstanding example of 'community spirit' and how to lead a full and worthwhile life.

**Geoff Orton**

# Margate Civic Society

[www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.margatecivicsociety.org.uk)



A corporate member of MSC



Founded in 1968, the Margate Civic Society is a registered charity (No.257884) and a founder member of Civic Voice. The Society's purpose and aims are to encourage high standards of architecture and town planning in Margate and its environs (Birchington, Westgate-on-Sea, Cliftonville, Westbrook, Garlinge, Acol, Sarre and St Nicholas-at-Wade); to stimulate public interest and care for the history and character of the area; and to encourage the preservation, development and improvement of features of general amenity and historical interest. To this end, Town Pride awards are given annually to those buildings which have been refurbished, cleaned or modified and which, in the opinion of the Society, have enhanced the appearance of the town. New high-quality buildings are also eligible for the award. The Society also vets planning applications and makes known to Thanet District Council any objections to those applications which it considers necessary.

## Committee for 2021/22:

**President:** Mr Ralph Handscomb

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**Secretary:** Vacancy e-mail: [secretary@margatecivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@margatecivicsociety.org.uk)

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**Minutes Secretary:** Ms Kate Wilson

All committee members are Trustees of the Society.

Please contact the Society by email at [enquiries@margatecivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@margatecivicsociety.org.uk)



## Enrolment/Renewal Form

I enclose the sum of £..... (Cheques should be made payable to Margate Civic Society)

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Tel:..... Email:.....

## Subscription rates for 2022/23

	Individual	Joint	Junior (under 18)	Corporate
Paper Newsletter*	£13	£17	£5	
Email Newsletter#	£10	£14	£2	£20

Please send this form with your payment to the Treasurer, Mike Wilton, 30 Barrington Crescent, Birchington CT7 9DF. Please see our website for alternative methods of payment.

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