

In brief Latest folk act at Black Robin

CANTERBURY: Acoustic guitarist Brooks Williams will be performing at The Black Robin Inn in Kingston on Sunday. The singer-songwriter is the latest act to be booked through Canterbury's Folk in the Barn promoter Deb Earl.

The gig starts at 6.30pm, tickets are £12 in advance £14 on the door. You can also take part in a guitar workshop with Mr Williams at the barn. The two-hour session starts at 1pm today (Thursday) and costs £25. There are limited spaces. For details and to book go to www.folkinthebarn.co.uk or call 01227 831493.

Comedy club

CANTERBURY: Chatback comedy club is back at The Parrot pub on January 30.

Funbi Otamayo, and Jonny Pelham will be appearing, with Rich Wilson as compere.

The show starts at 8pm. Tickets cost £7 and £8. To book go to www.chatbackcomedy.com

Plea for help

CANTERBURY: The Epilepsy Society is looking for people willing to be trained as volunteers to look after the charity's information stand in East Kent Canterbury Hospital.

The hospital holds outpatient neurology clinics on Tuesday afternoons.

Anyone interested in volunteering can call Mr Hutton on 07834 655992, e-mail trevor.hutton@epilepsysociety.org.uk or visit www.epilepsysociety.org.uk

How we lost our county status after five centuries

AT THE entrance to the Westgate Gardens next to the Westgate Towers there is a clue to the historical importance of the original City of Canterbury.

The signboard welcoming visitors to the Westgate Gardens is headed City And County of Canterbury and bears the historic city arms.

The sign serves as a reminder to citizens of the importance of the county status granted to the city and which was removed by the Conservative government of Prime Minister Edward Heath, as part of the one-size-fits-all amalgamation of boroughs into much larger districts, which took effect 40 years ago, on April 1, 1974.

In 1448, King Henry VI granted Canterbury a Royal Charter, decreeing that the city should be "of one mayor and one commonalty, wholly corporate forever". The charter conferred prestigious county powers upon the city.

"Forever" came at midnight on March 31, 1974, with the implementation of the Local Government Act 1972 abolishing the County of the City and Borough of Canterbury, Bridge - Blean Rural District Council, Herne Bay Urban District Council and Whitstable Urban District Council, replacing them with one larger Canterbury District Council and ending 526

Way we were

Richard West Founder of the Chaucer Education Project vie.tcep.org.uk



years of historically important independence for the County of the City and Borough of Canterbury from the County of Kent.

County boroughs were the original all-in-one single-tier local authority, with both the city council and county council responsibilities fully integrated.

The Canterbury Education Authority of the County of the City and Borough of Canterbury was also the managing agent for the St Augustine's division of the Kent Education Authority, an effective and efficient use of resources without overlapping bureaucracy.

Canterbury Corporation, as the county borough was formally known, was the statutory county authority for education, highways, libraries, museums and public health and received funding to provide those services.

The transfer of these to Kent County Council when the City of Canterbury was downgraded to only district council status, is still



LANDMARK: Canterbury Cathedral on Christmas Day

Photo by Richard West

responsible now for the greater difficulty in continuing to fund museums.

Canterbury Corporation, as the county council for the city, was also responsible for issuing driving licences, vehicle registration documents and vehicle excise licences, from Marlowe House in the Dane John Gardens.

Counties corporate became county boroughs under the Local Government Act 1888. Kent had only one county borough. Other towns became boroughs but none were conferred with county powers.

In the third paragraph of the appendix to the first edition of the book Portrait of Canterbury, by John Boyle, former town clerk of the county borough, published on April 25, 1974, three weeks after the destruction of the county borough by Edward Heath's Government, questions are asked about how county borough status came to be lost, adding: "Short of starting another Peasants' Revolt and marching up to London, and chopping off the heads of a few unpopular ministers it is hard to say what more the city could have done."

Town council status within the boundary of the former county borough would upgrade the role of the Canterbury Area Members Panel but would not itself resolve the current absence of the previous county powers. However, application for unitary authority status by the town council could return those powers to the city.

Area members panels were introduced as an afterthought, as resentment increased at the loss of accountability in each community.

Section one of the Localism Act 2011 enables a local authority to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject only to commercial purposes being through a company.

Area members panels could be devolved powers and resources by Canterbury District Council, Kent County Council and central government.

District councils in Kent are already sharing resources with their



BOUNDARIES: A map of Kent ridings in the Chaucer Foundation - a charter for action?



SIGN: City and County of Canterbury signboard at the Westgate Gardens

Photo by Richard West

neighbours, within a boundary similar to that identified in 1986 in my objective thesis published in September 1986 entitled The Chaucer Foundation - A Charter For Action, which outlines the concept model for The Chaucer Education Project as the prototype for founding Chaucer University.

Page 3-2-7 shows the logical boundary for a St Augustine's Riding of Kent, based on the long established and successful single-tier ridings in Yorkshire. The County of Kent map shows the boundary before April 1965.

The founding name of -the University of Kent at Canterbury reflected the fact the campus

straddled the boundary of two counties - the County of the City and Borough of Canterbury and the County of Kent.

On January 9, 2014 a great rising took place at the Canterbury City Council meeting held in the Guildhall. Whether or not that rebellion was the end of the revolt or not even the end of the beginning, time will tell.

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