***A CANTERBURY TALE***

**LOCATION WALK SUNDAY AUGUST 28 2022**

## ITINERARY AND NOTES

# Canterbury West Station

*Bob: “Pilgrims for Canterbury, all out and get your blessings.”*

The platform where on Monday, August 30, 1943, Alison, Peter, Bob and Thomas Colpeper JP arrived in Canterbury on the 8.57 am train from Chillingbourne.

# Level crossing, St Dunstan’s Street

# Classic view of Westgate Towers on the last mile of the pilgrims’ road to Canterbury Cathedral - a view captured in *A Canterbury Tale* as the train from Chillingbourne arrived.

St Dunstan’s Church (NW up St. Dunstan's Street) was last stop for pilgrims and has a vault containing the severed head of Sir Thomas More, beheaded 1553.

## Falstaff Inn

In medieval times one of the inns outside the city walls where pilgrims stayed overnight if they arrived in Canterbury after the Westgate closed for the night. Where Geoffrey's father waited for Alison to visit Canterbury.

# At Westgate, west side

Where ‘the pilgrims’ and Mr. Colpeper parted company and

where the military parade marched off through the Westgate into the city centre.

Gate was new when Chaucer’s pilgrims came to Canterbury in the late 14th century.

Henry II “barefoot and weeping” entered city here on his pilgrimage of penance in 1174.

Wartime air raid post on top of towers.

Playlet on bridge (3 men. 1 women)

**Colpeper: *“You know the way?”***

**Alison: *“Yes thanks, I’m taking Bob to the Cathedral. He’s got a date there with his buddy.”***

**Colpeper: *“Then it's good-bye.”***

**[to Peter]**

**Colpeper: *“Good luck”***

**Peter: *“Thank you”***

**[Colpeper walks off]**

**Alison: *“Why 'good luck' to you especially?”***

**Bob: *“Yes. Why you?”***

**Peter*: “Military secret”***

**Bob: *“What's cooking? Tell a fella.”***

**Peter: *“We're off today.*”**

**Bob: “*No! Where to?”***

**Peter: “*Oh, don’t worry. I’ll be seeing you.”***

**Bob: “It's a date.*”***

**Peter: “*And the more of us the merrier.”***

Peter sets off towards the Police Station …

Bob & Alison head off towards the centre of town.

note bridge overhead used when Westgate was a prison …

# Pound Lane, on the east side of the Westgate

City Police Station ..; note features that have survived since Michael Powell’s film unit was here in 1943 … windows no longer bricked up.

Blue Lamp bracket?

Playlet opposite Police Station (2 men)

**Peter: *“I’m looking for the police station …Superintendent Hall wants to see me*.”**

**Inspector: *“He’s not in.”***

**Peter: *“When will he be?”***

**Inspector: *“Well, it's hard to say. He’s got a job on. Special service in the Cathedral and they're marching through the city.***

**Peter: *“I think I'm one of them.”***

**Inspector: *“Well, you ought to know. Suit yourself. But he won’t be back til the soldiers have gone.”***

**Peter: *“Trouble is, when the soldiers are gone, I’ll be gone too.”***

**Inspector: *“Well, you might find him round the Cathedral.”***

## St Peter’s Street

Site of The Archers’ office on the route of the scene filmed here in 1943 when the soldiers marched to the Cathedral.

Sidney Cooper Gallery. Where we held the Michael Powell Festival, 9th-16th October, 2004 - 17 films, ACT location walk & a conference

## Marlowe Theatre

Formerly the Friars Odeon Cinema, where the world premiere of *A Canterbury Tale* was presented in 1944.

A plaque was unveiled in the foyer in October 2000 by Sheila Sim (then Lady Attenborough), who played Alison; and John Sweet (Bob Johnson).

First time they had met since 1944. John unable to attend premiere.

Canterbury Public Library

From Powell’s memoirs:

**‘One took for granted the High Street and the narrow, medieval lanes – Butchery Lane, Mercery Lane (always confused in my infant mind with Nursery Lane), that pushed their way between the overhanging black-and-white houses. You can see them in my film when the marching soldiers turn left to their route to the Cathedral. My temple was the public library – the Beaney Institute – just as Goulden’s Lending Library was my mother’s. I would often swap books two or three times a day. My first act was to check down the Jules Verne's on the Indicators – red was Out, blue was In. These were all profusely illustrated with vivid engravings, at least fifty to a volume, and they led me to the bound volumes of *Punch* and of the *Strand Magazine* which lined our bookcases. This was when it dawned upon me that I had an eye. I found that I could identify any artist or illustrator by his line without looking at his signature.’**

**‘It was about the middle of the war, 1916, that I became a boarder at the Junior King’s School in Canterbury. It is now outside Canterbury … in the village of Sturry … but at the time I am writing about it was in the centre of the town and, so far as I was concerned, ideally situated, not more than four hundred yards from the two libraries that I patronized: the Beaney Institute, a public library, and Goulden’s, a stationery shop with a lending library of modern novels, where my mother had a ticket which allowed me to take out two books at a time. Frequently on half-holidays I would take out two novels … devour them standing at the counter or walking about the town, and change them for two more and so on through the afternoon until I had read eight novels with two extra for reading after prep that same evening.**

Across the street, The County Hotel, where Sheila Sim and John Sweet stayed in 1943 [They stayed there again when they returned in 2000 as well] …

Passing the site of the Fleur de Lis Hotel (34 High Street), where other members of the cast and crew stayed, and the shop that was once Goulden’s Lending Library, Michael Powell’s mother’s ‘temple.’

## The corner of Mercery Lane

Where the band turned off the High Street towards the Cathedral

John Clark appeared here with his mother in the crowd scene when the soldiers marched down the lane to the Cathedral

**The Buttermarket, outside the former Cathedral Tea Rooms (now Starbucks**)

Here the band countermarched while the soldiers marched through Christchurch Gate.

From Michael Powell’s memoirs:

**John (Michael's brother) and I had lost touch with one another at a vital time. I was passionately loyal to King’s School, where the boarders were the élite and the dayboys dismissed as dayboys. At Dulwich, I suspect, the reverse was the case. John was modern. I was obstinately Classical; and the Classics were part of my loyalty to King’s. So it wasn’t really loyalty to “the old school” that I felt. It was loyalty to place: to the High Street and the cattle markets that are no more, to the Christchurch Gate opposite Kit Marlowe’s statue in the Buttermarket, to Cave’s café, to the Cathedral standing amid the hushed green lawns of the precincts, to the vast silence of the nave, where a chair dragged across the echoing flagstones made one think of Becket’s body dragged by armoured men, pierced and slashed with swords, to die before the altar in the side chapel.’**

## Canterbury Cathedral Precincts

Where the soldiers marched, Christchurch Gate.

# In the Precincts

The South Door, through which Peter entered the Cathedral.

Playlet (2 men)

**Peter: *“Have you seen Superintendent Hall anywhere?”***

**Organist: *“Superin - This is Canterbury Cathedral, not the police station.”***

**Peter: “I'm sorry sir. *I was told he might be here. He wants to see me urgently.”***

**Organist: *“Urgently? [Looks around] Hrrrmmpphh!”***

**[Later, in the organ loft]**

**Peter: *“Are you the organist?”***

**Organist: *“Do I look like the charwoman?”***

**Make a self-guided tour of the Cathedral**

Take no notice if one of the official guides tells you he was in the south west transept with his father when the scene showing the mayoral procession entering the Cathedral was filmed!

Standing in the nave, recall Bob’s line: *“And my Dad’s pa built the first Baptist church in Johnson County. Oregon red cedar… cedar shingles… 1887. Well, that was a good job too.”*

# Regroup in the Cloisters outside Beckett’s Doorway, through which the four knights who murdered Thomas Becket entered the Cathedral on Dec 29, 1170.

Rose Lane

Playlet on corner (2 women)

**Alison: *“Excuse me, would you mind telling me, is this Old Canterbury Lane?”***

**WVS Lady: *“No, this is Rose Lane, Canterbury Lane is further up.”***

**Alison: *“I haven’t been here since 1940. The Rose Hotel used to be here.”***

**WVS Lady: *“Just where we’re standing. This is The Parade and that is St George’s Street.”***

**Alison: *“Oh yes, I see. Thank you”***

**WVS Lady: *“It is an awful mess, I don’t blame you for not knowing where you are. You get a very good view of the Cathedral now.”***

## St George’s Street

Follow Alison’s route to Rose Lane Garage, pass the shops built on the 1942 Blitz bomb sites and check the time on the clock that was seen in the film.

## Rose Lane Garage

Playlet near site 1 women, 2 men):

**Alison : *“Excuse me. is this Rose Lane Garage?”***

**Arthur: *“Yes.”***

**[Arthur opens garage doors]**

**Arthur: *“You don’t want to take her out, miss, do you?”***

**Alison: *“No. I just want to look at her. She’s a good friend of mine.”***

**Arthur: *“Caravan?”***

**Alison: *“Yes.”***

**Arthur: *“We haven’t touched her since the blitz.”***

**Alison: *“What happened to the tyres?”***

**Arthur*: “Requisitioned. You know the regulations. Mr. Portal couldn’t let you know, as he had no address for you ... he’ll be glad you’re here. I’ll go and tell him.”***

[Alison explores caravan, finds moths]

[Conversation with Colpeper. Mr. Portal enters]

**Alison*: “Hello Mr. Portal, how are you?”…***

**Mr. Portal*: “Miss Alison, why didn’t you leave us your address?***

***“Two weeks ago Mr. Geoffrey’s father came here.***

***“He came here all the way from Otford”***

**Alison*: “He doesn’t want the caravan. He can’t have it. It was Mr. Geoffrey’s wish that I should have it …”***

**Mr. Portal*: “It’s quite all right Miss Alison, he doesn’t want the caravan.***

***“He wants to get in touch with you.***

***“I told him I’d received a letter from you and that you were coming here.***

***“He’s waiting for you.***

***“He’s staying at the Falstaff.***

***“For over two weeks now he’s waited for you here, in Canterbury.”***

**Alison: *“Why?”***

**Mr. Portal: *“Because he has news, Miss Alison. Official news about Mr. Geoffrey.***

***“He’s in Gibraltar.”***

# [Alison faints]

Playlet at Christchurch Gate: (2 men)

**Micky Roczinsky*: “Hi! Why you home sick sad sack GI … and what in Canterbury have you been doing with your three days’ leave?”***

**Bob: *“Learning, sergeant, learning …”***

**Micky Roczinsky: *“Let’s have some tea first …hey babe, what’s cooking?***

***…now let’s get this straight. You came here by road, not by train.”***

**Bob: *“I came by train but the pilgrims used the old road.”***

**Micky: *“Why?”***

**Bob*: “For blessings, you character, for blessings.”***

**Micky: “*OK. Where’s yours?”***

**Bob: “*They don’t work nowadays. That was 600 years ago.”***

**Micky: “… *It don’t work nowadays huh?* W*ell I, Micky Roczinsky, have a blessing for you. I’ve been carrying these around for two days. They came the afternoon you left, from your girl.”***

**Bob: *“Give me those letters. What stamps are these?”***

**Micky: *“Australian. She certainly gets around.”***

**Bob: “*These were mailed in Sydney, Australia*.**

***“She’s joined the WAACs.”***

# Dark Entry

From Michael’s memoirs

The buildings of the school are half-monastic and half-modern. There is an arched entrance from the busy street and another entrance for pedestrians around the transept of the cathedral. It is part of the old cloisters of the monastery and at night you passed through a long vaulted tunnel, lit by flickering gas jets, where the sound of your footsteps followed you. It was haunted. It was called the Dark Entry. You came out, usually at a panic-stricken run, into the peaceful Green Court, where masters of the school and dignitaries of the Cathedral Church lived, if not in harmony, in charming houses around two sides of the wide green lawn.’

# One of the barrage balloons glimpsed in *A Canterbury Tale* was tethered on the Green Court.

## At Green Court

**I myself was now a Scholar at the King’s School, Canterbury, founded when St Augustine’s church was a wooden building. It stands in the Cathedral precincts, and the vast shadow of Bell Harry Tower falls across the quadrangle as the sun sets.**’

**Norman Staircase**

**‘The school was not so much planned as piled up around a gravel courtyard, the Quad** (The Mint Yard) **and was half red brick and half Kentish flint. The Assembly Hall was built magnificently over the archways between Green Court and the Quad and … you pushed and panted up the wide stone medieval staircase that gave access to it.’**

## Mint Yard – arched entrance

**‘All this I have tried to get into the last twenty-five minutes of *A Canterbury Tale* … inspired to dozens of small touches, glimpses of textures, effects of sunlight and shadow, and above all by love and grateful memory for having been born a Man of Kent. When I agreed to make *A Canterbury Tale* I expected that it would be a far more personal film than it turned out to be. I was working, creating a story in the county I was born in, the “garden of England,” a chalky country of bare downs and shallow valleys, of chestnut woods and little chuckling streams, of slowly turning water- and windmills, and white-capped oasthouses with the bittersweet smell of hops drying in the kiln. All this I knew from my childhood, yet somehow I failed to get it on the screen’.**

At Westgate, west side

Playlet on bridge (3 men. 1 women)

**Colpeper: *“You know the way?”***

**Alison: *“Yes thanks, I’m taking Bob to the Cathedral. He’s got a date there with his buddy.”***

**Colpeper: *“Then it's good-bye.”***

**[to Peter]**

**Colpeper: *“Good luck”***

**Peter: *“Thank you”***

**[Colpeper walks off]**

**Alison: *“Why 'good luck' to you especially?”***

**Bob: *“Yes. Why you?”***

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**Bob: *“What's cooking? Tell a fella.”***

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