

MEDIA  
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2026



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Seaside Stories

# WHITSTABLE WHISTLER





Brightside Publishing produce free, uplifting print magazines which showcase the bright side of towns and cities in Kent.

Our magazines are packed with features covering art and culture, music, business, food and drink, homes and interiors, local people, community issues and much more. They are also award-winning: in 2024 four of Brightside Publishing's magazines were awarded Kent Magazine of the Year at the Kent Press and Broadcast Awards. Brightside Publishing was also awarded the Kent Voices Award for featuring diverse and inclusive content and giving a voice to a wide variety of people and businesses in East Kent.

Our roots are in Margate where we launched our first magazine, the *Margate Mercury*, in 2016. Since then we have launched six further titles, for Ramsgate, Broadstairs, Whitstable, Deal, Folkestone and Canterbury. Each magazine is led by an editor who lives locally and is passionate about their town, commissioning locals to write about what matters to locals. Our core team are all local, designers, distributors and social media managers.

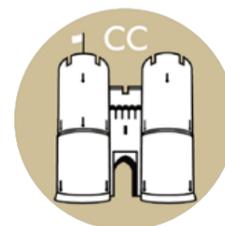
Our magazines are independent and unbiased in their content. We are also regulated by IMPRESS.



**Margate Mercury**



**Whitstable Whistler**



**Canterbury Courier**



**Ramsgate Recorder**



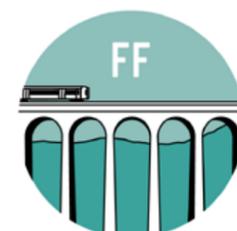
**Deal Despatch**



**Faversham Firework**



**Broadstairs Beacon**



**Folkestone Foghorn**



**Rochester Radar**



**The Whitstable Whistler** is a quarterly print magazine about the seaside town of Whitstable in Kent. The magazine was launched in spring 2021 and features a range of stories covering art and culture, music, food and drink, local people and much more.



## **Eve Chataway**

### **EDITOR**

Eve has lived in Whitstable for seven years, having previously resided in sunny Sydney, Australia. She has a wealth of experience as an Editor, having worked for several years at a homes and interiors publishing company providing columns and supplements for publications including the *Daily Telegraph*, *Evening Standard*, *Woman & Home* and *Sunday Times*.

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## **Hannah Attwell**

### **DESIGNER**

Hannah has over thirty years experience designing and art-directing magazines for national publishing companies. She moved to Whitstable in 2005 to bring up her children and as well as working as a freelance designer, she enjoys screen printing, gardening and walking her two dachshunds on the beach.

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## **Annabel Lichfield**

### **DISTRIBUTOR**

Annabel joined Brightside Publishing as *Whitstable Whistler* Distributor in spring 2023. As a resident and holiday cottage owner since 2016, Annabel's local interest helps drive her reach to stockists throughout the town and beyond. Favourite pastimes include walking fox terrier rescue Teddy.



## FOOD & DRINK

Our food and drink pages feature the latest food news for the town, as well as more in-depth features on local culinary business owners and entrepreneurs. For instance, in our spring issue we launched our Community Kitchen series, highlighting seasonal recipes from our local eateries.



**COMMUNITY KITCHEN:  
Bears Ice Cream  
Imaginarium**

Writer  
Mike Russell

The Whistler pays a visit to the Wonka-esque ice cream shop slap bang in the High Street, the ideal place to grab a cooling cone on a summer's day

No visit to a seaside town is complete without ice cream and Whitstable is into its second summer of supreme soft-serve and scoop ice cream from the Bears Ice Cream Company - or to give it its full High Street home title, Bears Ice Cream Imaginarium.

Imaginarium: "A place devoted to the imagination". That place is the kitchen at the back of Bears Ice Cream Company and the imagination filled with dairy and plant-based dreams belongs to Phil Harrison. Standing around the kitchen's stainless-steel island, as strawberries get whizzed with a hand blender and various cream concoctions make their way to the ice cream-maker, there are the first inklings of parallels with Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka character. For every Everlasting Gobstopper, Lickable Wallpaper or Hot Hot Chocolate, Phil has creations that have the town's food fans excited like golden ticket winners outside the chocolate factory gates. Recent Imaginarium innovations include a twist on an Easter staple, with a hot cross bun ice cream. There's then lavender - commonly remembered as a 1970s soap scent - combined with blueberry and meringue swirl, a flavour so outstanding it has reached the finals for the Taste of Kent awards, with winners to be announced just after we go to press. In true Wonka style, Phil saves revealing the groundbreaking flavour profile of another ice cream until tasting time.

Phil has been in kitchens all his working life, with the attraction to ice cream seeming to run through him like the red of a raspberry ripple. As an award-winning chef, Phil worked in various parts of the country - Yorkshire to Cornwall - rising through the culinary ranks, as well as travelling around Europe experiencing the flavours that other countries and cultures had to offer. A double scoop love affair emerged from Iceland. It's where Phil met Vera Thorsdottir, who is a fashion designer and luxury brand consultant. Combining the couple's lives and professional skill sets means the Bears is a family-focused business - so much so that with the arrival of the couple's second child, a branding adjustment was required to include their son in the Bears' company logo. The brand now features two cubs, along with mummy and daddy bears, with the matching tattoo on Phil's calf being the last part of the company's brand presence to get adjusted. "One day when my son was old enough, he spotted that the tattoo on my leg only featured



**"As strawberries get whizzed with a hand blender... there are the first inklings of parallels with Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka character"**

two big bears and one small one, so getting it updated to include him had to be done quickly," Phil explains about maintaining the Bears' family harmony. It was while living in Iceland that Phil got the inspiration for the scrummy selection of scoops with the multitude of sprinkles and toppings customers can add to the tubs, to create what are known as Glaciers. "A friend of ours said he thinks with the number of different flavours we always have, combined with 40-plus types of sprinkles and toppings, there's probably around 4,000 Glacier combinations available at any one time," Phil says. It'll be a summer packed full of surprising scoops at the Bears thanks to Phil's pipeline of

fanciful flavours created using seasonal and, where possible, locally sourced ingredients, such as the lavender coming from Castle Farm in Sevenoaks. Bears has marked one year in Whitstable and the opening of the Imaginarium was once more like a page from Dahl's Wonka tale. As with the chocolate factory, the High Street unit had sat dormant for a while, with no noticeable commercial activity, and then, in time for the bank holiday, behind the scenes the Bears family pulled out all the stops in a matter of days to roll the soft-serve machine forward to the front door. A year on from opening, Phil is ready to reveal another ice cream innovation in a tasting session for the Whistler. There's a fudginess to the ice cream - not pieces or chunks, but the overall texture - a golden brown colour, which is only enhanced by a buttery, slightly salty taste sensation. Salted caramel wouldn't do it justice, but it has that sort of flavour about it. After spoonfuls that mimic Augustus Gloop's chocolate-river greediness, Phil unveils he's taken the humble jacket potato - skins and all - and turned it into an ice cream. "I don't want to do flavours or combinations that are available somewhere else. Where's the interest or fun in that?" the Wonka of Whitstable's ice cream industry confirmed.

**Bears Ice Cream Imaginarium,  
81 High St, Whitstable CT5 1AY  
bearsicecream.co.uk**

## BEARS ICE CREAM'S ETON MESS SERVES 4

**INGREDIENTS**  
Tub of Bears soft-serve ice cream (available in store)  
Strawberries  
Basil  
Strawberry puree  
Balsamic glaze  
Meringues

- METHOD**
- 1 Choose some cool plates or bowls if you want a more Eton mess effect. First down is the strawberry puree, a few blobs here and there.
  - 2 Next to plate up are the strawberries, some halved, some sliced, it really is up to you. Then add the meringues.
  - 3 Give the balsamic glaze a swirl over everything, especially the strawberries. It gives a wonderfully sharp and sweet hit.
  - 4 Finally, ball-up the Bears ice cream. Sprinkle on the baby basil. Serve and enjoy.

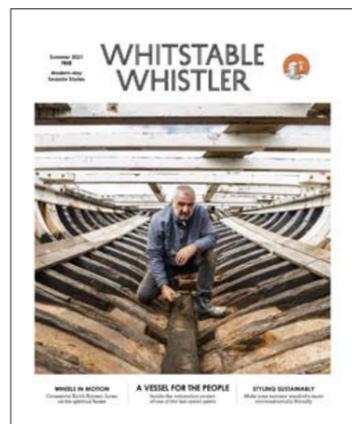
Please remember that Bears natural soft-serve ice cream is mainly made of milk. The low fat and sugar content means that it does not like staying in the freezer overnight, it goes hard, so it is best eaten on the day of purchase.





## COMMUNITY

We love to highlight the people making a positive difference to the town. For instance, for our summer cover story we rolled up our sleeves up to hear more about the ongoing restoration plans on one of the last oyster yawls in Whitstable's working harbour.



# A VESSEL FOR THE PEOPLE

▼ Peter Kalopsidis, volunteer team leader

**Writer**  
Duarte Figueira  
**Photographer**  
Whitstable Photographic  
Company / Alex Hare

**Duarte Figueira meets the Whitstable Maritime volunteers restoring the Gamecock oyster yawl and hears their plans to buoy community spirit with its return**

**W**hen you get close you realise how graceful and well named the *Gamecock* is. Without its mast and rigging, it is not yet a pretty sailing vessel. But its hull flares out powerfully at the bow before smoothing inwards and then upwards at the stern, just as its namesake's tail would. Those smooth lines ensured it was a champion in its heyday, winning several oyster yawl races a hundred years ago.

That was no mean feat in those days. There were up to 80 yawls dredging in the Swale, supplying perhaps half of London's oysters. Building, sailing and repairing them was key to the local economy. So the *Gamecock* is more than just a sailing vessel - it's almost the last representative of a seafaring tradition that runs deep through Whitstable's DNA.

Last summer the *Gamecock* was gently lifted onto the East Quay of Whitstable Harbour. Now visible to the public without obstructing harbour traffic, it is being lovingly restored to its prime by the dedicated volunteers of Whitstable Maritime. The charity's mission is to strengthen the town's economy by building on its maritime traditions and crafts. Its founder and chair, Gordon Vincent, enthuses on the significance of the *Gamecock* to Whitstable's heritage.

"For me what is remarkable is that we have the opportunity to restore to working order a 42-foot oyster yawl that was built on Island Wall in 1907



by Whitstable shipwrights, the Collar Brothers, was worked all its life in the Swale by Whitstable oystermen, including the Strouds, was eventually rescued from oblivion in the 1960s by a local fisherman, Bill Coleman, and is now being restored by Whitstable volunteers for use by its residents and visitors."

The same enthusiasm runs through everyone involved in the project. Peter Kalopsidis, volunteer team leader, explains that just now they are deciding which deck beams need replacement rather than restoration. He points out the quay

**"Local groups of all ages and abilities should have an opportunity to experience sailing an oyster yawl, as their ancestors did"**

space loaned to Whitstable Maritime by neighbouring Brett Aggregates, where wood pieces removed from the *Gamecock* are laid down for repair. He also emphasises how helpful harbour master Mike Wier, and his assistant have been in helping the team to "beg, borrow or buy" what they need for the work.

David Britten, one of the volunteers working on the beams, recounts how he got involved. When he retired he needed to stay busy and had initially helped out at the local hospital and hospice. But the pandemic had curtailed that type of volunteering ▶



and he'd moved on to the *Gamecock* project. A year ago he was pumping water out of the vessel before it was brought back to Whitstable from Faversham creek. Now he is helping to repair time's ravages to its timbers.

Gordon Vincent stresses the degree of local business and other bodies' commitment to the project: "One of the great joys of working on this project is the support from the local community. For example, Barton International has offered to make traditional wooden blocks for the rigging. ICOM has offered to fit a marine radio and navigation equipment. SeaG8 are helping fund a new marine engine. While the Harbour Board has provided the berth and Alan Staley of Boatbuilders of Faversham has offered to craft the mast. Alan served his own apprenticeship in a boat-building yard on Island Wall. All of these companies have firm roots in the local marine industry."

Notwithstanding all this support, the restoration remains a big job. As well as the deck replacement and installation of new rigging, it includes fitting a new stern, galley, berths and engine. The work will be carried out under the supervision of

**VOLUNTEERS**

**TOP LEFT:**  
Peter Kalopsidis,  
volunteer team  
leader. Photo:  
Duarte Figueira

**MIDDLE RIGHT:**  
Morgan Lewis,  
shipwright on  
the project

**TOP RIGHT:**  
Gordon Vincent  
of Whitstable  
Maritime

**LOWER IMAGE:**  
David Britten  
between deck  
beams

local shipwright Morgan Lewis, using like-for-like materials and traditional techniques.

The charity aims to have the *Gamecock* seaworthy by 2023 if the £80,000 target funding can be secured. Its efforts were recently boosted when Kent brewer Shepherd Neame announced a contribution to the project.

When the restoration is complete Whitstable Maritime has a host of ideas for sailing the vessel and is considering options for how the *Gamecock* will earn its living. Present thinking includes providing sail training for youngsters and educational and team-building opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Marine research is another possible avenue being explored, as is match racing it along





### ARTS & MUSIC

We love to feature a range of local artists, musicians and makers in the magazine. For instance, in our winter issue, we grabbed a swift one with Whitstable's original foul-mouthed feminists, Profanity Embroidery Group, to hear why swearing makes you smarter (and stronger).



## A COMMON THREAD

Writer  
Cheri Percy  
Photographer  
Jack Eames

**Our editor Cheri Percy sits down with Whitstable's original foul-mouthed feminists, the Profanity Embroidery Group, to hear why swearing makes you smarter and stronger (and you better bloody believe it!)**

Before I arrive at Alison Fitzgerald's house on Borstal Hill (or PEG Heights, as it's affectionately known in the group), I spot a woman fully clad in yellow. She's entering a driveway behind a towering green hedge and I know I'm almost in the right place. Ahead of our shoot today, co-founder Annie Taylor has rallied the troops together in matching yellow garb to bring some much-needed sunshine (and swearing) to the incoming darker months. For a bunch of artists famed for their colourful language though, it's not the first time that Profanity Embroidery Group has gone bright and bold. Last year saw the foul-mouthed flock take part in the Craftivist Collective's climate campaign, Canary Craftivists. Teaming up with founder Sarah Corbett, the project championed a cleaner and greener world for all. Crafters across the UK were encouraged to send local MPs small handmade canary gifts with thought-provoking reminders of our world's welfare and for the government to push its climate commitments. The PEG productions were mostly made from scrap or foraged materials. But naturally they brought a bit of their own signature sauce to the stitching. "I said to Sarah, 'we'll do it a little bit our way,'" begins Annie, "and she was like, 'That's fine.' Then, of course, she started seeing the photos popping up. One Sunday morning I had this text. Obviously we've not been very gentle and I said to her, 'Well, the thing is, we've literally got sh\*t in the sea!'"



This kind of direct response is precisely what makes Whitstable's Profanity Embroidery Group so refreshing, particularly against a current political backdrop of woolly inaction. In fact, comedian Kathy Burke commended the group for their punk approach to the (sometimes antiquated) notion of a female-led committee in 2019's *All Women* series on Channel 4. Burke found the south-east sew-and-sews on Twitter as an alternative to the producers' hopes to interview the Women's Institute. Now 25 members strong, PEG meet every two weeks, coming together to craft their latest work, needing naughty words onto quilts, cushion covers and curated pieces that are sold across the UK. And it's in this setting that I next meet up with the blasphemous bunch, huddled around the open fireside at the Duke with a steady stream of thukarby gin and tonics. No longer the docile, voiceless pastime you might associate with Regency-style manor houses, the humble art of embroidery has come to symbolise the strength and power of a woman's private inner sphere. "People say, 'What a waste of beautiful embroidery to ruin it with swear words.' As if it should only be flowers," exclaims PEG member Sarah Jesset. "But swear words are beautiful

embroidery!" reasons Emily Turner. "That's kind of the expectation, isn't it, that women are gonna sit there and embroider things. We've sat in here loads of times embroidering stuff and the men are over there and they come over. They're like, 'Oh, okay!'" "I love it," retorts Bridget Carpenter with a wicked laugh. Speaking of subverting women's roles, the Profanity Embroidery Group's latest team-up sees them participating in Brighton-based artist and lecturer Vanessa Marr's Domestic Dusters Open Call. The collaborative project (much like Burke's series) explores contemporary perspectives on the everyday lives of women, inviting participants to embroider their thoughts, and frustrations as words or images onto a yellow duster. The cleaning cloths will then be strung together like brightly coloured bunting, a familiar fescion if you've already spotted some of PEG's proud works around Whitstable. "Are our knickers coming down then?" asks longstanding member Jan Lewis over the table to Annie. "The knickers are already down," she answers, swiftly with a grin. For years a string of profanity embroidered parts welcomed punters at the Twelve Taps Gin Bar. Now the local watering hole will proudly display the dusters as their new look

bursting from 14 February, coinciding with PEG's own domesticity-themed exhibition down the road at the Fishlab Gallery. Even since they began sharing their work in 2014, Profanity Embroidery Group has been pushing people's buttons. And not just the vintage ones they've scored from Sally at Anchor's Aweigh for their latest designs. When the group first came to exhibit (quite by accident) back in 2014, it was remarkable how little time it took to rile the crowds, as Annie reflects: "I was on the beach about 10.15am going, 'We've had a complaint!' This was half an hour into the first exhibition." Very much fans of the make-do and mend approach, their compromise involved hanging huge stretches of bubble wrap up at the window to make the context of the show more discreet but, as Annie reasons, "Some people still wouldn't come in because they thought it looked too seedy!" For the group's upcoming exhibition, they've decided to quite literally take things into their own hands by stitching together a giant tapestry to dress the window for those who need a bit more cotton wool cocooning their craft. The banner also gives them a chance to get

back into the swing of things after the last few years. As Annie jokes, "Doing something we can stitch quite badly in the pub, it doesn't matter if we get beer on it." But it's not all outraged cries for censorship in response to their work, as Emily recalls: "One woman came in and said, 'Oh, I've come from Seasalter church', and I'm like, 'Okay, you know what this is, right? It's a swear thing.' 'Yeah, that's why I've come!' she responded. 'We've just done a workshop on how to embrace your inner f\*\*k because sometimes you just need to say f\*\*k.'" Dumbfounded Emily admits, "That'll teach me to judge someone who walks through the door!" Regardless of creed or colour, there is something liberating about embracing the right expletive. Indeed, researchers at the University of Rochester in New York quizzed 1,000 people about 400 typical behaviours and discovered a strong link between intelligence and swearing. Rather than being the sign of someone with a limited vocabulary, the

study - published in the *Language Science* journal back in November 2015 - found that swearing proficiency was a sign of rhetorical strength. "And integrity," believes Sarah. "I don't trust people who don't swear. I'm more likely to open up to somebody who can be honest and not filter themselves." It's not just a sign of integrity but also a valid coping mechanism according to Dr Raffaello Antonio, a counselling psychologist and the clinical director and founder of Therapy Central. "Swearing can have a truly liberating effect when we're feeling bottled up with frustration," he says. "Saying the F-word, or similar can have an immediate calming impact on the difficult emotions we might be experiencing." The Profanity Embroidery Group appreciates these merits having attended the launch party for Emma Byrne's book *Swearing Is Good For You*, in which she argues that our most cherished dirty words are in fact both big and clever. Sarah remembers her own first forays into foul language and the freedom she felt in doing so (despite her father's reaction). "I started swearing when I was 12. I said 'bloody' [and] my dad would say, 'Do you have to say that?' And I was like, 'Yeah, I do.' Because it was the only

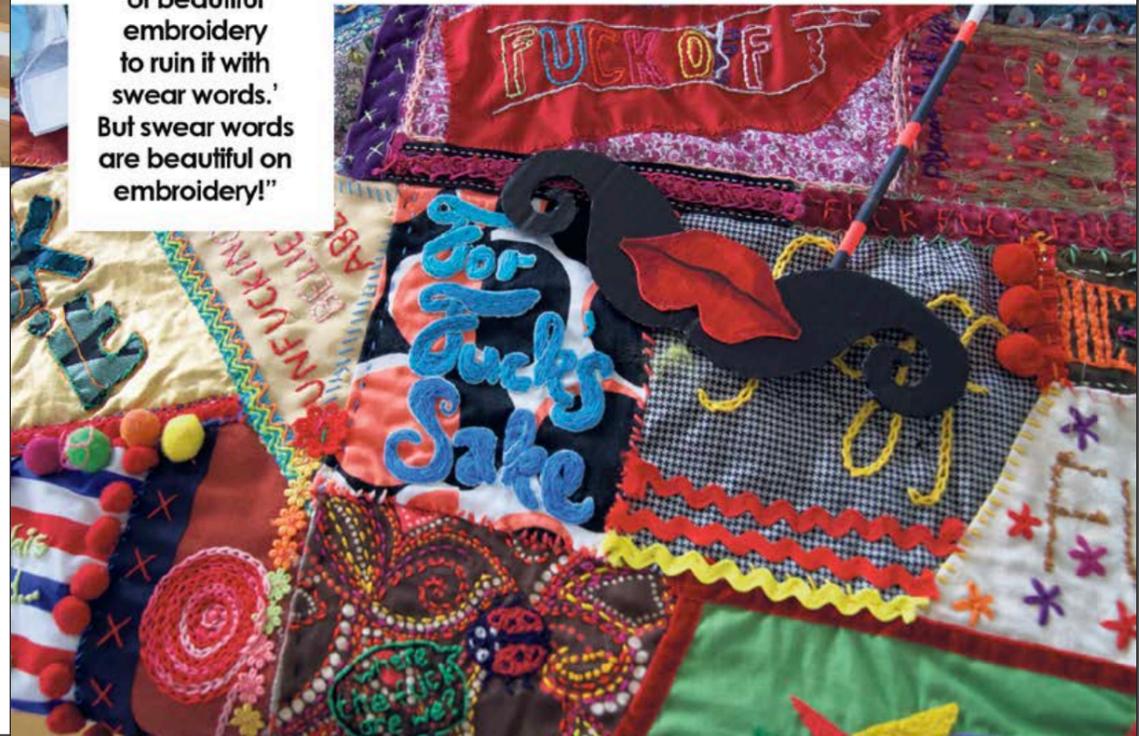
word that would express what I wanted to say." But then there's always been a bit of a barometer when it comes to women's rage. Something Emily knows all too well tapping into the levels of our vulgar vocab in her work. "I made a f\*\*kometer. It was bought by a psychiatrist in Guildford for her waiting room," she admits dryly. "I did a funny thing too and that was bought by a gynaecologist! Some people find it really easy [but] I'm much weirder about it than I thought I would be [when it comes to] stitching it down. I've never stitched 'C\*\*t'!" At this point, Sarah leans across the table to quiz Bridget about whether she's upped the ante on her swearwords. Legend has it, she was good at stitching and not so good at swearing when she first joined. "That's what they used to say," she smiles. "But that's an urban myth. I grew up with three brothers. Do you think I didn't know about swearing?" Only now, of course, the idea of swearing is no longer reserved for the loud and lairy elder brothers or the catcallers on the street after a night out. By crafting slapper slippers and adding some poodle pizzazz to the idea of being a silly bitch, Profanity Embroidery Group is reclaiming what once were words used against them into the armour for a

new generation, starting with Bridget's own growing grandchildren. "I've got an eight-year-old granddaughter and she looks at my work around the house. I've got one and it says 'Shit happens' and she said, 'I'd like that one for my bedroom.' Because shit does happen. It's about learning to understand when it's appropriate." And even if it wasn't, it's safe to say PEG would call bedlocks to that anyway. **The Profanity Embroidery Group's domesticity exhibition launches on 14 February at Fishlab Gallery, 11 Oxford St. Pick up a copy of their bloody brilliant book, *F\*\*k Off, I'm Sewing!* Swearing and Sewing that Will Have You In Stitches from your local bookshop or via [hive.co.uk](http://hive.co.uk)**

**TRY YOUR HAND**

**The deadline for final submissions to Vanessa Marr's domestic dusters must arrive in the post by 30 January 2023. Contact her at [domesticdusters.wordpress.com/contact-us/](mailto:domesticdusters.wordpress.com/contact-us/)**

**"People say, 'What a waste of beautiful embroidery to ruin it with swear words.' But swear words are beautiful on embroidery!"**



**Distribution**  
**29,000**  
**a year**



  
**Over**  
**7,000**  
**followers on**  
**social media**



**Estimated annual**  
**readership**  
**69,600**



**Over**  
**150+**  
**stockists in**  
**Whitstable and**  
**surrounds**

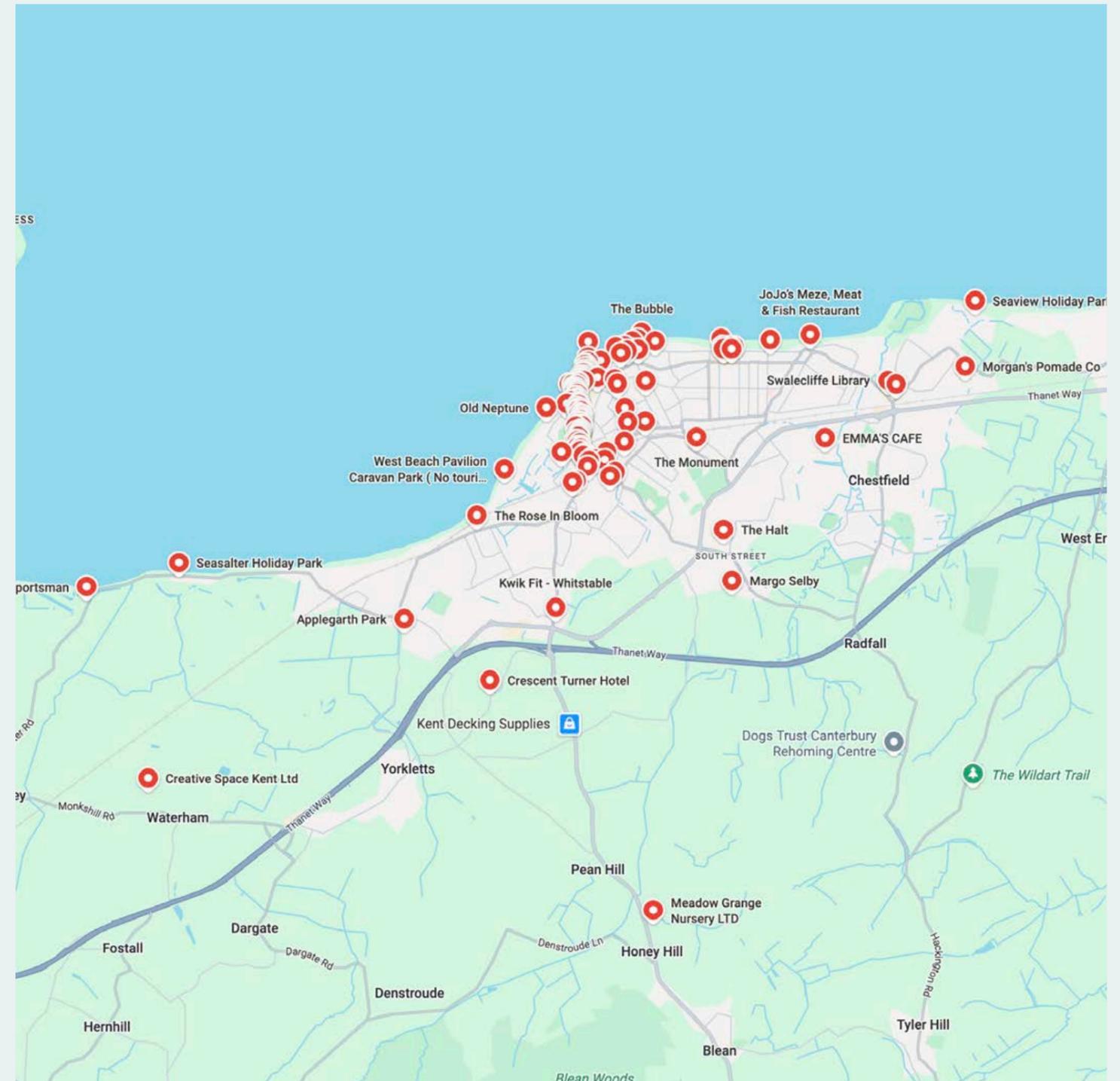
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Half page	£270	£240	£225	£210	£190	£175	£160
Quarter page	£150	£135	£125	£110	£100	£95	£90

\* A £20 premium will be charged for all summer issues due to a higher distribution

## Publishing dates

ISSUES 2026	PUBLICATION DATE	DEADLINE TO BOOK	ARTWORK DEADLINE	DISTRIBUTION
WW Spring	12 March	12 February	19 February	7000
WW Summer	4 June	7 May	14 May	8000
WW Autumn	10 September	13 August	20 August	7000
WW Winter	3 December	5 November	12 November	7000

## Testimonials

“Bubble have advertised within all Brightside Publications magazines for over a year now to predominantly increase brand awareness locally.

The publications offer a key target audience for us and in turn have seen an increase in local enquiries and web searches since we started advertising.”

**BEN ROWE,  
BUBBLE STUDIOS**

All Brightside publications

“It can usually be difficult to understand how well advertising works, so when clients say they saw my ad in the *Ramsgate Recorder*, it’s great to know it’s working.”

**HANNAH RZYSKO  
LIFE COACH AND  
YOGA THERAPIST**

*Ramsgate Recorder*

“I placed a quarter page in the winter issue of the *Margate Mercury* for my new business offering swimming lessons. The magazine has been out for just three days and I have already had two enquiries, so that’s such a good start. It’s often difficult to track advertising response, especially with print, but this is absolute proof that the *Margate Mercury* delivers.”

**RAE SIMS, RISING TIDE**

*Margate Mercury*

“Our first advert in the *Margate Mercury* was in the spring of 2018 and we haven’t looked back. While so many print publications have sadly fallen by the wayside, the *Mercury* continues to be a shining example of what’s possible in terms of editorial, photography and purpose. We have had work through our advert but our main reason for advertising is to show our support for the *Mercury* and the manner in which it draws our local community together.”

**IAN PRISTON,  
BOYS & MAUGHAN**

*Margate Mercury*

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