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**TWITTENS #01: CHURCH TWITTEN**


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Twittens are not the sole preserve of Lewes, or even of Sussex, but we do happen to have a particularly fine collection. They were a Saxon invention (which explains the name: a variation on the theme of ‘betwixt’, ‘between’ and the German ‘zwischen’) and were, apparently, a result of King Alfred’s planning policy – his towns were orderly, well fortified and part of a sophisticated military defence network. So from Lewes’s main streets the twittens lead you, at almost regular intervals, into a scaled-down, less traffic-ridden landscape, a world of high flint walls and narrow vistas. Or at least that’s the idea. But the march of progress means that it is now Church Twitten, itself probably a medieval addition, which provides us with the most authentic experience: a sheltered alleyway offering brief respite from much of the twenty-first century. In fact, Church Twitten used to go by the name of Church Lane – one of several Church Lanes in Lewes – and only received its new, more singular title in 1954. Since then it’s been twitten by name and twitten by nature, even surviving the odd breach of its high flint walls and other slings and arrows of development. *Juliette Mitchell*

With thanks to Kim Clark, author of *The Twittens: the Saxon and Norman Lanes of Lewes*, Pomegranate Press.

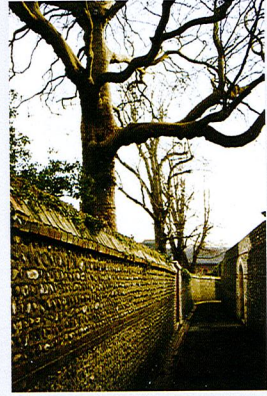


Photo by Ed Kirby

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**SHOP FRONT #04: BOW WINDOWS BOOKSHOP**


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You probably know that a bow window is a curved bay window, and you’ll also probably have noticed, being intelligent and observant, that Bow Windows bookshop doesn’t actually have them. The original purpose of shop-front bow windows was to maximise the display of the interior, while cheekily getting round byelaws about encroaching on the public right of way. And back when Bow Windows bookshop was in its original premises, at 128 High Street, it did of course have the eponymous panes. That building, just down from the Pelham Arms, and now a private residence, played host to a succession of tea rooms before being taken over in 1964 by antiquarian booksellers Dawson’s of Folkestone. Having traded successfully for two decades, Dawson’s was sold to Alan and Jennifer Shelley, under whose stewardship the change of premises eventually occurred.



175 High Street, the current location, is much more central, and until Alan’s death in 2009, the Shelleys enjoyed a successful 25 years establishing Bow Windows Bookshop as an important and much-loved source of literature in Lewes. Now run by the equally dedicated Ric Latham and Jonathan Menezes, it remains a first class destination for the discerning bibliophile. *EK*

Illustration by Lyndsey Smith, whose prints and cards can be bought from Chalk Gallery, [lyndseysmith.co.uk](http://lyndseysmith.co.uk)