



THE WAY WE WERE



UNUSUAL: A Hand in Hand plaque, 12 Prospect Place



ODDITY: The house with two fire marks - 9-10 St Peter's Street

All photos courtesy of Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society (CHAS)



OLD OR NEW? Adelaide Place



MEANING: St Peter's Street



POLICY NUMBER: 8 Church Street



INSURED: Whitstable Road

City's plaques



MEANING: St Peter's Street



POLICY NUMBER: 8 Church Street



INSURED: Whitstable Road

City's plaques have historic significance

Yafit Lazar

yafit.lazar@KRNmedia.co.uk

EVER taken a walk through the streets of Canterbury and wondered about the significance of some of these sun-face style plaques?

Well wonder no longer, Times Way We Were columnist David Lewis, from the Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society (CHAS) has given us an insight into where they are from.

Once placed on houses that were insured for fire damage, they can be spotted right across the city.

Motif

Mr Lewis said: "Our hunt for fire marks has had limited success - nine are shown in the photos, all but one image showing the Sun Fire Office motif.

"Some look too new to be original marks, and several show the same policy number, suggesting that they are recent additions."

The plaques represent the Fire Office, considered the first modern fire insurance company. It was also famous for its "Phoenix in a flame" emblem.



INSURER'S HQ: The Parade

The company was founded in 1680 after the Great Fire of London.

In 1705, after other fire insurance companies sprung up, the firm rebranded itself as the Phoenix Fire Office.

But if you look closely at the pictures you could also find a different emblem.

Mr Lewis said: "The only company other than Sun is the Hand in Hand emblem in Prospect Place."

By 1719 the Hand-in-Hand insured a large number of cities in the south east and later expanded its coverage to other parts of the country.

Mr Lewis also shed light on the prices of the insurance some local properties purchased.

He said: "We know of insurance values for some Canterbury properties through the surviving records of the companies themselves.

"The Royal Exchange Fire Insurance records held at the Guildhall Library show policy details for Abbot's Mill, insured by James Simmons in the 1790s for £1,167 plus £666 for the mill wheels."

■ If you spot other plaques across the city, please e-mail photos of them to: newsdesk.times@KRNmedia.co.uk