**Thomas Stearns Eliot (T.S Eliot) (1888-1965)**

**Place:** Margate

**Publication of interest**: *The Waste Land* (1922)

“On Margate Sands.

I can connect

Nothing with nothing.”

* *The Waste Land*

After suffering a breakdown in 1921, T.S Eliot positioned himself in the seaside town of Margate to recover.[[1]](#footnote-1) It was there he wrote “The Fire Sermon,” part three of the hugely influential poem *The Waste Land*. [[2]](#footnote-2) Eliot wrote to Sydney Schiff from the Albemarle Hotel in Cliftonville on November 4th 1921 stating: “I have done a rough draft of part of part III [of The Waste Land], but I do not know whether it will do, and must wait for Vivien’s opinion as to whether it is printable. I have done this while sitting in a shelter on the front – as I am out all day except when taking rest.”[[3]](#footnote-3) The Nayland Rock promenade Shelter is a grade II listed building on the coast of Margate and widely believed to be the shelter T.S Eliot wrote about in his letter to Schiff.[[4]](#footnote-4) Eliot also had an earlier connection to Kent, through the author [H.G Wells]( 20c-wellshg-biography), by writing a review for him in 1901, while Wells was living in Sandgate. [[5]](#footnote-5)

*The Waste Land* maps the landscape of life post-war. Its style and form were unprecedented and altered the way poetry was seen, read and understood.[[6]](#footnote-6) The poem combines the old with the new, taking its form from classic and, the newly emerging, modernist poetry. “The Fire Sermon”, written in Margate, takes the reader on a journey through the landscape. It juxtaposes itself with beauty and barrenness. It also grapples with the psyche of those living through the period and the reader gets a true picture of this with Eliot’s only mention of Margate in the poem. It feels almost pivotal to the bringing together of the landscape and mind emphasising that “On Margate Sands. / I can connect / Nothing with Nothing.” [[7]](#footnote-7)

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1. McIntire, xix [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Rainey, 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Eliot, 916 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Historic England, Listed Buildings [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Sherborne, 144 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. McIntire, 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Eliot, \_*The Waste Land\_* [↑](#footnote-ref-7)