

could halt the destruction of valuable green breathing space, and the necessary lungs of a residential area had been preserved.

It was back in 1921 that the bulk of the land was acquired by the then Dover Borough Council from a local landowner, Mr Banks, at the cost of a little over £930. A further strip along Lewisham Road was purchased from Mr Dunford and the entire area declared recreational land. The land had originally been known as Crabble Court and a house of that name is still in Lower Road and occupied by the Child Welfare Clinic. It was decided to call this land River Recreation Ground and so avoid confusion with Crabble Athletic Ground.

In its first years of life it only had football and hockey pitches and a rough tennis area, but soon, with increasing unemployment in the early 20s it was decided to use some of these men to level an area for a Bowling Green and in the summer of 1923 River Bowling Club came into existence. Following this the tennis courts along Lower Road were improved and the River Originals Tennis Club was formed. The club still flourishes with the recent reinstatement of three more courts and is the only club catering for junior players in the District.

The Woodpeckers Cricket Club is a more recent arrival and was only properly established after World War II but it is now thriving and has added River to its title. The two football pitches are of excellent standard and are in constant use during the winter season, both mid-week and at weekends. The Junior pitch at the eastern end of the ground is the only one in the District and is the venue for ace Dover Junior League games and sees many a final fought out between the teams from local Primary Schools.

The ground will now pass into the care of River Parish Council who, we hope, will be mindful of their responsibilities and together with the people of River preserve this open space and continue its traditional use as a recreation ground for generations to come.

*Alan Dale*

## **FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF DOVER**

For one whose previous knowledge of Dover was confined to the Western Docks when travelling to Europe, arrival in the 1950s was an exciting experience.

Despite the daunting task of finding somewhere to live, as so many properties were uninhabitable or badly damaged, the stranger was immediately struck by the salient fact. Here was a town, battle-scarred as it was, which was steeped in history and experience, and whose inhabitants were full of hope and confident that it was on the brink of great things.

Councillors and Aldermen, volunteers in those days, were determined to tackle all the shabbiness, and the shopkeepers were eager to please. How often one heard the helpful remark, "We haven't got it but try Clout's or Morecroft's".

I remember walking, pre-war map in hand, amongst the piles of rubble on the Sea Front, trying to locate the site of the Fox Inn or the Gordon Boys' Home, later rejoicing in the refurbished St Mary the Virgin with its new East window.

Dover to me seemed a comfortable town. It was possible to park outside Hatton's and drive both ways in Maison Dieu Road; a man selling crabs stood by the steps to the old lock-up in Townwall Street; one could take tea at the Pharos in Castle Street or eat dinner at the Café de Paris or the Crypt. Soon flowers appeared in the beds at Connaught Park, and as one walked under the whale-bone arch the goldfish in the pond caught the eye. Then there were tennis courts in the Park<sup>and</sup> in the front of Brook House, and



in the newly opened Museum in Ladywell were exhibited the Town Plate and the old Burghmote Horn, now, alas, vanished.

Although at the time the Eastern Docks seemed busy, there were but two ferry berths, land reclamation was just beginning, and the Hovercraft was as yet in the experimental stage.

Maybe it is wrong to look back over 30 years. I no longer wonder what on earth is a fabled cake, and perhaps have almost ceased to regret the disappearance of the Salutation Inn and the lovely catalpa tree by the Library, although it would be nice to have a Cricket Week again. But I, and thousands of true Doverians, care desperately about the future of the Town, and would dearly like to see it regain its old enchantment.

*Marion Horsfield*

I came from the Midlands to live in Dover on January 1st 1946. It was not the bomb and shell damage which I remember most clearly, for I had experienced both having spent the war years in Coventry, but the incredible kindness of the Doverian people, not least that of the shopkeepers. Rationing was still the order of the day. I have not forgotten dear Mr and Mrs Morris, Family Grocers, and 'Daddy' Morris's superb ham sandwiches, Albert Decourt, Butcher of 'The Hole in the Wall', Bench Street, with his advice in plenty on 'best buys', pleasant Mrs Emmons in the Orange Shop and Charlton Creamery, Frith Road, run by Mr and Mrs Savage.

Living by the sea was a totally new experience. A Sea Front shared with a railway, and long, pleasant walks on cliffs littered with barbed wire entanglements, to St Margaret's Bay and Kingsdown, offering splendid views of the magnificent harbour and across the Channel. More than 40 years on, I have no wish to leave. Dover is still very much home for me.

*Freda Brook*

I hope that these two articles will be the first of a series. Contributions of First Impressions of any time between 1888 and 1988 invited. Editor.

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## DOVER - The View from a Wheelchair

I have lived all my life in Dover. I was born here, I grew up here and it was here that I was struck down by Multiple Sclerosis, so gradually that for a while it was barely noticeable. But now, twenty-three years later, I have it rather badly. This makes me very aware of facilities for disabled people, especially those in wheel chairs.

Like other disabled people I have a great deal of time on my hands and I would love to take a course. Unfortunately Further Education is not possible in Dover because there are so many steps at both Westmount and the College of Technology. The staff are most willing but there are limits to what they can do and disabled people are often very independent and don't like making a fuss. At Westmount the toilets, so vital to people like me who don't get much warning, are in the basement.

Dover is not well supplied with toilets for the disabled and even those that exist are not adequately sign-posted. Some of them need a special key which I feel should be more widely advertised or, better still, should be given out with the Orange Badge for disabled drivers.

Another thing that really bothers me, not only in Dover, is that when I go out for refreshments the cup is invariably filled to the brim and I just cannot manage a full cup.