

RIOTOUS TIMES IN DOVER

Dover's poll-tax demonstration in March was praised for its discipline and order. It was not ever so. As P.J. Mooney wrote to the *Independent*, the earliest recorded riot in British history took place in Dover.

"The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" he wrote, "records a riot in Dover in 1051 when Count Eustace of Boulogne and his retinue were returning home from a visit to King Edward the Confessor and apparently demanded a level of hospitality that the local people were not prepared to offer. A brawl ensued resulting, in one account, in the deaths of 20 local men, 19 Frenchmen and a large number of wounded.

(In similar circumstances we treated Sir Clement Freud more kindly in August 1989!)

"This international incident", Mr P.J. Mooney continued, "threatened King Edward's growing dependence upon the aristocracy of France and Normandy. Dover was a part of the Earldom of Wessex and Edward demanded that Earl Godwine 'punish' Dover. Godwine refused and his family were banished and Norman-French ascendancy at the court of Edward grew, contributing to the polarisation of ambition between the native Anglo-Danish aristocracy and the Norman-French."

"The temporary eclipse of the House of Godwine may also have helped to convince Duke William of Normandy, not only that his claim to the English throne was good in law, but that the main English opposition through the House of Godwine was irretrievably weakened.

"All in all, this was a very important riot which may have significantly affected the course of English history".

I wonder did our Councillors as they were fixing the poll tax in March think of this early history of our town?

Nor was Dover behind the times in the matter of gaol riots. Readers of Philomena Kennedy's *"Walk Round Dover"* and those who followed the Guided Walk led by our Chairman this April, will know that the name of Gaol Lane, off the Market Square, commemorates the New Gaol, new in 1746 and destroyed by a mob in 1820, when some smugglers were released.

Leo Wright



DUNKIRK EXHIBITION at THE BAY MUSEUM

26 May - September 1990

Photographs, slides, sound archive, mementoes.

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Local paintings and crafts are normally available for sale.

The Editor will be exhibiting here in the second half of August.

