



Photo: Ray Newsum

AWARD-WINNING *Woodland Restoration Project*

Brilliantly inspired was the inclusion of 'Trees' by Peter Booth in the musical entertainment at the Society's Christmas Feast last December, for that very morning the final effort was made and the 200-tree project completed. The news that the project had won national recognition in the form of an award from The Civic Trust came later and made the effort all that much more worthwhile.

It all started back in summer 1990 with the idea that The Dover Society should participate in The Tree Council's National Tree Week, and at the same time help do something about local woodland destroyed in the hurricane of '87. Only residents of Temple Ewell know the true extent of the damage to Lousyberry Wood (known also locally as 'the Beechwood') and the urgent need to help restoration of this local beauty spot.

Lousyberry wood is crossed by footpath ER182 from Whitfield to Temple Ewell and is in frequent use by local people. The wood consisted of a fine stand of mature beech at the north end which in October 1987 suffered something like 90% windthrow. This was an appalling disaster and the whole community was distressed by it. The land

owner is to be congratulated on having done so much clearance work. Further clearing of herbage undergrowth and fallen trunks is required before replanting is undertaken. The devastation of the beech woods is clearly visible from the Lydden Road, Alkham Valley and Whitfield Hill, with loss of the beautiful skyline. 'Although privately owned it is much used by local people and has great community value' wrote Dr Jim Davis of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and 'Men of the Trees' in October 1990.

The first move was to obtain permission of the landowner, who had largely cleared the damaged trees, then followed liaison with parish, district and county councils, the Tree Council, CPRE, Men of the Trees and the Civic Trust. All gave their expert advice and encouragement when it was needed most.

Inspired also by the Tree Council's National Tree Week (22nd November - 2nd December), the enthusiasm of local people and members alike and the 1990 theme 'trees and children', the Dover Society project committee went ahead, cheerfully assisted by children from Temple Ewell village school. 'I am in full support; it will broaden their horizons and stimulate their interest in the environment' commented Headteacher Mrs E. Waller. A talk on the project was arranged at the school followed by a cross-curricula project on 'trees' which the children did.

Some details of the project follow. There were to be three phases comprising site preparation, planting and after-care. Site preparation involved further clearance of deadwood over the planting area, cutting back of grass and bramble, followed by digging, weeding and marking of tree plots. Planting consisted of 'favourable species' to assist tree regeneration to predominantly a beech wood in an area of approximately 0.25 hectare consisting of 140 *Fagus sylvatica*, (beech), 30 *Acer campestre* (field maple) and 30 *Prunus avium* (gean) transplants (60cm max). Transplants were



Keith Playforth of British Telecom presents Chairman Jack Woolford with Civic Trust Community Pride Award 1990 on Sat. 26.1.91

124 to be at approximately 3 metre centres within 60 centimetre protective shelters, with bitumen-based tree mats to help reduce competition from surrounding vegetation and to conserve moisture. The after-care period involves periodic checks and lifting of shelters to clear any weeds which appear, plus dealing with any encroaching undergrowth, to enable the transplants to get away with a good start.

Throughout November and into December on Saturdays and Sundays the volunteers pressed on with the daunting task, though it was the village school which set the ball rolling with a magnificent early effort at clearance of the deadwood ably led by teacher Mr Bryn Thomas. Leo Wright did sterling work rallying his neighbours to the cause, and passers-by during work sessions were prevailed upon to join there and then, or on subsequent work-sessions. The weather was generally kind, but the Rotoract group (valiantly led by Nigel Curtis) had to contend with everything the elements could throw at them on their day and deserve the highest praise for what they achieved in truly adverse conditions. Hearing of the Society's efforts and being a member and keen tree man, David Shaw, MP and Mrs Shaw joined a work session in December during National Tree Week by way of encouragement and gladly acceded to the request to take a spade and do some planting!

All sorts of people found time to help out, from the very young to the not so young - the sight of Chairman Jack Woolford stripping down to shirt sleeves and 'turning to' in late November is not for the weak-hearted! The Glover family arrived in strength on a number of occasions and it was good to see one Society member travelling in from Tilmanstone to help. At most sessions we had refreshments kindly provided in the form of coffee; sometimes sweets would appear and on occasions something a little stronger for, whatever else happened, we were determined to enjoy the experience!

A varied assortment of tools including secateurs, shears, billhooks, sickles, adzes, mattocks, pickaxes loppers, saws and, it is believed, a sledge hammer, whilst showing we meant business, must have presented an incredible sight along with the varied assortment of working clothes, not least the person who it appeared had brought one of everything - just in case! But what of Jim Davis, a seasoned treeman who rather than give up planting trees for a bad back, has perfected what must be a unique technique of pick-axing in the kneel-down position complete with (magic?) carpet!

As this was our most ambitious environmental project to date we were a bit dubious about funding the operation. The 'whip-round' at the 'Presentation of Awards' meeting raised close on £70 from members and friends and was an excellent start to our fund raising, but for this project we were going to need much more. Working directly with KCC, there was the possibility of a grant provided we kept to the scheme specification, which we duly did and passed inspection on site. The grant was awarded conditional on the after-care requirement. Sponsorship was meanwhile being sought, but on this occasion we did meet with a good response and our financial position began to improve. One Dover company sent a cheque for £25 without being asked. They had heard of the project and responded, which is most encouraging. Eventually the project was fully funded and it was possible to enable some prizes to be awarded to four children who did particularly well. They got a book on 'Trees' and



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the school was given a specially commissioned 'Tree Week 1990' shield with the good wishes of the Dover Society.

Of the ten awards made nationally in 1990, the winning of the Civic Trust Awards for the project was delightful news and serves as an encouragement for the future.

The presentation of the Civic Trust/British Telecom Community Pride Award 1990 by British Telecom representative Mr Keith Clayforth, took place on Saturday, 26th January and Chairman Mr Jack Woolford MA received the Award Certificate on behalf of the Dover Society.

This project was particularly satisfying for its permanence and future enhancement of the local environment for the long-term enjoyment of generations to come.

The Society wishes to acknowledge with thanks the sponsorship of: Crest Hotel, Dover, Hammond Motoring Services Ltd., J. Sainsbury plc, Seaboard plc and Trosley Equipment, Dover without whom the project could not have been successfully completed.

JOHN OWEN