

# *An "Oliver Twist" of a Members' Meeting*

25 NOVEMBER 1991

KEN BERRY, The Society's Treasurer

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The evening was cold, dark and miserable. In spite of that there was an excellent attendance. The meeting went very well. The Chairman fought against a time barrier and everything went so smoothly that a member asked for more — actually asked for more members' meetings! — and was supported by many a "Hear Hear". The committee will, of course, seek to comply with this request.

The meeting, I think, was stolen by Budge Adams, after the interval. His slides of old Dover, limited to a commentary of 35 seconds a slide, were delightful. One could feel the waves of nostalgia from old Dovorian sweeping the hall. Accompanying the slides were some of Budge's characteristic asides. "That's where my father's first mother-in-law lived". Immediately one was worried. Supposing one's father had had only one mother-in-law. Had one missed out on something? Worse still, what if one has had only one mother-in-law oneself? Never mind. We had moved to an absorbing discussion between Budge and Miss Kay as to the exact location of the house in which she lived in as a child, in Strond Street. Congratulations, Budge, it was a great show!

If Budge dominated the second half, then Adrian Galley was the star of the first. Leo Wright (General Secretary) and John Owen (Projects Officer) were first class, but Adrian sparkled. The Chairman, in congratulating Adrian on his performance, his work and his active rôle in the Society, suggested it might lead to greater efficiency if more young people joined the committee. I think it might be added that "oldies" on the committee would willingly make way for younger people. Let me hasten to add that anyone under seventy would be regarded as young; so please come forward before the next AGM in April 1992.

Adrian's talk dealt with the activities of the Planning Committee, concentrating on the developments in the town centre. He explained that the Society follows, supports, comments on and criticises the efforts and proposals of the Dover District Council and the Kent County Council. He stressed the need for active interest by Dovorian and was supported by Councillor Paul Watkins, invited from the body of the hall by the Chairman to comment on current developments in the town. Councillor Watkins welcomed the activities of Adrian and of the Dover Society and outlined the project for town regeneration and environmental assessment, known as "Impact". After the success of the Heritage Centre, Dover is to benefit from this project. In addition there was news of the Salvation Army taking over the Victoria Hospital building to provide

accommodation for elderly residents. Also mentioned was the initiative of the East Kent Business Centre (comprising Dover District Council, Dover Harbour Board, Eurotunnel and the Chamber of Commerce), already making plans to cope with future job losses in the area. He mentioned the Honeywood and Farthingloe sites as possible areas of future development and added that re-training facilities were to be made available for those affected by the changing transport pattern of the district.

John Owen's report dealt with the cleaning of the River Dour in certain areas of the town, praising the Sea Cadets and the Scouts who had provided manpower. He also talked about two major ongoing projects, Lousyberry Wood tree-planting and the restoration of Lydden Pond. Both projects involve physical labour and considerable expense. John was congratulated by the Chairman both upon the projects and the sponsorship (well over £1000) which he has obtained for these schemes.

The general Secretary dealt with some of his special interests, in particular the question of Water, which is reported in detail in the *Newsletter*. He also explained the problems arising from the orchestral concerts sponsored by the Society. Sponsorship had helped to cover the costs so that the Society funds had not been tapped, but he needed extra support. The problem had been discussed with the Tourist Board and the Dover District Council and it was expected that they, between them, might take more financial responsibility for future concerts. It is hoped that Dover will be able to have regular concert sessions. If so, it will have been brought about by the work and enthusiasm of our General Secretary and his wife, Margery. The town and the Society are indebted to them.

The first two speakers of the evening were representatives of the Water Authorities. Mr Beard, from Winchester and representing Southern Water plc, explained the work being undertaken to protect the beaches of the South and South-East by building more sewage treatment plants and extending outflows. Unhappily, Folkestone, Deal, Broadstairs and Ramsgate are below standard and will not reach the required E.C. standard until 1995. Dover beach had not been regarded as a bathing beach. There is no evidence, as had been suggested, that the outfall, although a short one, is fractured. It will probably be extended, eventually, to a full three kilometres.

Mr Dooley, on behalf of the NRA, spoke about the Dour and produced maps, showing the catchment area and position of the boreholes. He also explained the problem of the granting of the right to draw water, which is given to agricultural and industrial users, over which there was little control before 1964. All Folkestone Company water is pumped from boreholes to meet our demand for water. No storage facilities exist in the area, but plans are going ahead to provide capacity and a grid system by which water can be moved from wet to dry areas. The Dour is low because of insufficient rainfall since 1988. Already, it seems, the politicians are worrying about the costs which all these sewage and water schemes are likely to entail.

All speakers were thanked by the Chairman. During the interval Jeremy and Sheila Cope, the raffle experts, persuaded members to part with £43.00. whilst our Social Secretary, Lin Clackett, had, as usual, provided opportunity to slake our thirst.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this very successful event.