



Day Trip to St. Omer

—CECILEY W. WALKER

AFTER the stormy and chilly weather at the beginning of the month, it was a relief to members anticipating their journey to St. Omer, that the 19th turned out to be more seasonable – without a cold wind or rain. We boarded our coach in buoyant mood and were driven on to the "Pride of Dover", confident of a comfortable and calm crossing.

Our driver ensured we all knew the position of our coach before we went on deck and our organiser gave us a list of various restaurants in St. Omer, together with a pamphlet and map of the town. All this was very helpful to our enjoyment of the day.

Back in the coach at Calais and on the road to St. Omer our driver/courier explained he was taking us on a country route so that we would pass through villages and farms. We appreciated this and also his excellent driving.

On our arrival at the Tourist Information Office we had about two hours to have lunch and explore before re-assembling to meet our two guides. We were drawn magnet-like to the large, well stocked market nearby in the Place Foch where we browsed, tried out our French and bought cheeses. Fruit and vegetables were in abundance besides clothes and household goods, but what impressed us most was the quality of the plants and cut flowers on offer. The boxes of huge blemish-free pansies of all colours were particularly tempting.

After lunch we set off for the tour in two groups – each with a guide. First we were led to the Park which claims to be one of the most beautiful in France and is set in the old ramparts of this old frontier town. We looked from a bridge on to a wide expanse



The Organ in the Cathedral of Our Lady



In the Courtyard of the Musée

St. Omer 1992

A corner of the Park



La Cathédral





The Town Hall at St. Omer – "The Coffee Pot"

– a large modern dormer window dominating a tall elegant town house of considerable age. Our guide agreed it was a mistake!

A short walk through a narrow street took us to the splendid Cathedral of Our Lady. Completed in the 16th century, it is in gothic style and illustrates a history in stone of ecclesiastical architectural development covering four centuries. We all felt that the outstanding feature was the grand organ, with its surrounds of carvings and statues, at the west end of the cathedral. Its recent restoration took three years to complete. It was all so absorbing that we stayed a little longer here than expected – some members still made time for a brief visit to the Museum which they thought well worthwhile.

Back in the coach in the late afternoon, we were whisked into the hypermarket for last-minute shopping, and out again on our way to Calais and home. Our thanks were expressed to those who so ably organised a thoroughly enjoyable day out, Leo Wright,

Society Members in the Courtyard at the Musée



of lawn on which there was a formal arrangement of well-manicured, evergreen bushes of different shapes and sizes.

Further on, surrounded by beautiful trees, we had a glimpse of some of the elaborate flower beds and, no doubt, there were many more to see,

Next we assembled in front of the Town Hall – known as "The Coffee Mill" because of its shape. It was a pity we were not invited to see inside, so that we could make a comparison with our own Town Hall. Place Foch is surrounded by an attractive variety of architecture, mostly Dutch and with some of the buildings exposing warm yellow-coloured brickwork where the stucco had been cleaned off. Altogether a pleasing sight and only one blot on the landscape, to those of us sensitive to planning matters on the D.D.C.

our Secretary and Joan Liggett, our new Social Secretary. As one of our older members was heard to say as she was being 'dropped off' in Ladywell – "thank you all. I've had a lovely day, but I'm glad to be back in my dear old Dover!"