

with imagination and with quality., This is where the Dover Society can make a valuable contribution and I hope I can help in some small way. 39

I believe that we should strive to conserve the best of the past but that conservation policies are mistaken if they try to preserve buildings just because they are old, regardless of quality. The prime purpose of Planning, as implied by the word, is to look to the future – to provide for tomorrow's history by encouraging the best new ideas today. I very much hope that anynew development in Dover will be imaginative, innovative, modern and visionary.

Talking of visions, may I take this opportunity to sow the seeds of an idea for Dover. I understand the Government is planning to spend a large proportion of the proceeds of the proposed national lottery (many millions of pounds possibly) on something to mark the end of the millennium. As the end of the millennium will surely be linked with the end of Britain as an island race, it seems appropriate that whatever is done reflects our connection with Europe. As Dover is at the nearest point to the Continent, does it not seem to be the obvious place? It may be just what Dover needs and perhaps the Society would like to develop the idea further.

A BRONZE AGE TALISMAN ?

TWO of our members, June and Harry Dyer, spotted an interesting passage in a book they had been reading, *The Jason Voyage* by Tim Severin, which relates a journey in a boat which was a replica of Jason's *Argo* in the thirteenth century BC. Severin had a twenty-oar galley built in the Aegean to the exact specifications of a Bronze Age boat and, with a crew of Argonauts, made the same 1500-mile journey.

Apart from Homer's *Odyssey*, many Greek poets wrote of Jason's journey. Severin records that the most complete surviving version of the tale was written in the third century BC by Apollonius Rhodius, head of the great library of Alexandria. Severin draws the attention of his readers to an interesting feature of the *Argo* described by Appollonius Rhodius. Apparently the *Argo* carried a very special piece of timber in the prow, a bough cut from a sacred oak, which was some kind of lucky talisman.

Could this be the answer to the missing piece of timber hacked from Dover's Bronze Age boat? Perhaps the prow, or a figurehead was removed because the timber had a sacred significance for its sailors.

Just one more idea for the historians to ponder upon!

EDITOR.