

A REPORT

by

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THE SECOND FESTIVAL of Dover was once again jointly organised by Dover District Council's Tourism and Economic Development Department and Kent County Council's Arts and Libraries Department. During the two week period more than eighty events were staged in Dover and the surrounding areas with an experimental selection in Deal.

This annual arts celebration attracted over 10,000 people of all ages, of which over 6,000 attended the concerts, workshops, Teddy Bears Picnic and the educational package.

The main object of the project is to enhance the quality of life for local people and also for visitors to the area. It gives an opportunity to take the arts out to the community, for instance to schools and homes for the elderly. The Dover Society has set the wheels in motion with many artistic events, and the Festival continues to assist in creating a new cultural identity for the White Cliffs Country by offering a range of art forms for everyone. Our aim is to work with public and private sector organisations with which we have valuable partnerships, built up over the last few years.

The composition of the programme reflected the commitment of the Festival committee to offer – at a reasonable price – a wide range of high quality arts events, environmental activities, curriculum-related arts workshops and community projects. Workshops in schools, residential homes, libraries and in the open air formed over 40% of the Festival programme, with musical and literary activities accounting for 15% each. Dance was a new art form introduced for 1993 and the Folk and Authentic Jazz covered 6% of the programme, with walks 8% and visual art 9%.

The Festival was launched at Dover Town Hall with a gala concert by the internationally-acclaimed Brandenburg Chamber Orchestra. To encourage local residents to enjoy this performance, Dover District residents were offered half-price tickets, which appeared to be under-utilised.

The most popular event was the Teddy Bears' Picnic at Kearsney Abbey and this free event was also the favourite for 1992. Despite the weather, over 2,000 people, 38% younger than twelve years of age, enjoyed the many attractions on offer. Other successful activities included the Snowdown Way Concert by the Snowdown Colliery Welfare Band and Male Voice Choir, the Jazz ensemble - Sax Appeal, Joe Bloggs Fashion Show at Images Nightclub, Origami Workshops and the Jazz Dance Workshop with the Jiving Lindy Hoppers, which was a sell-out.

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24th May – 5th June

Due to unforeseen circumstances, a literary talk was postponed as was the British Heart Foundation concert. The worsening situation in Croatia also meant the cancellation of the Croatian Artistes. A selection of quality events had low attendance figures including the Hand/Dupre Classical Guitarists, the literary evening with author Pamela Oldfield, the Harpist and Soprano Concert and the Folk Dance evening.

Analysis of the responses to the market research questionnaire show that 60% of those attending this years Festival were new patrons, 70% of those interviewed described the events as good value for money and 7% thought they were average. 60% of those attending the Festival were from the White Cliffs Country area and 33% from other areas in Kent.

For concerts and other higher-profile events the largest age group attending was the 60+ (41%) with the 31-45 age bracket the second largest.

For the Teddy Bears' Picnic 38% of the audience were children under 12, with 24% of those attending being in the 31-45 age group.

The Festival of Dover is now an important feature of the annual events diary and has achieved many of the aims set by the Festival Committee and the overall Dover District Council Arts Strategy. It is hoped that each year, by utilising the analysis undertaken and the lessons learned in previous years, the Festival will gradually increase in stature and popularity and become a major event in the National Festival calendar.

