



The fascinating emptiness and loneliness of the sands temporarily invaded. *photo* Budge Adams

An Evening on the Goodwin Sands

MARJORIE WIGGINS

“Rough to moderate” was the weather forecast which proved to be correct. Massing in the foyer and encouraged by the Kent Morris Men to the music of the Floral Dance, we embarked on the Hovercraft, the fun part starting when we were asked if we all had our passports. On our way out the Captain pointed out the remains of the “Luray Victory” and the “North Eastern Victory”, visible as evidence of the undigested prey of the greedy Goodwins. After a bump or two on the South East of the Sands, having already dropped off members of Meridian News who promised we would appear on TV the following evening (we did!), we landed and this motley crown spilled out on to the Sands, grateful no doubt for the keen air, which soon turned chilly.

I skirted the rim of the sands looking for wildlife to photograph, having already been shown the heads of the elusive seals – do they really exist? For me, the patterns of the movements of these sands and their varied colourations would have delighted any water-colourist and I was able to get some shots of bird and human steps seemingly leading out to sea, together with excellent cloud effects. A pity it was too

Returning to the Hovercraft I found all the activity concentrated on the port side. A jester, the Morris Dancers, and everybody who was determined to be eccentric for this evening at least, was there, including a passenger dressed as a French policeman calling himself Jon Darne – is Franglais here to stay? There were also two passengers reminding us of the x number of shopping days to Christmas. Stalls were set up for souvenirs and canned beer and there was even a resolute group in full picnic regalia, complete with seats, tables and food. For an hour on the Sands? I am sure, however, they enjoyed it. I can only liken this part of the trip to Hampstead Heath on a pre-war Bank Holiday or Epsom Downs on Derby Day.

Two thoughtful gestures were in evidence on this trip. Sir Roger Manwood's School ran a raffle in aid of Guide Dogs for the Blind and another raffle was in support of the Dover Sea Cadets.

Undoubtedly there was something for everyone and as a Dovorian by adoption – I'm still learning – I hope it will be possible to enjoy such another trip next year. The only wildlife seemed to be a flock of gulls which descended thankfully to enjoy their former peace, all heads, including those of forty-five Dover Society members having been counted on board before we left.

Our thanks are due to Joan Liggett for her part in organising the trip.

The Kent Morris Dancers very energetically enlivened the scene.

photo: Budge Adams

