



# Festival of Dover 1995

## MEMORIES — SARAH PASCOE

*Arts Development Coordinator  
Dover District Council*

The fourth Festival of Dover took place between 7th and 21st May, expressing the spirit of the 1940s under the theme 'Memories'. With the 50th Anniversary of VE Day acting as the focal point of the programme, a series of both celebratory and commemorative events was successfully staged throughout White Cliffs Country.

This year's annual celebration included heritage, music, dance, drama, crafts, exhibitions, walks and talks. From a 1940s Big Band Concert performed by the locally renowned 'Railway Swing Band' to jitterbug and jive dancing with 'Maddy's Jive School' and from a tour of the 'V' weapon sites to celebratory street parties, the festival offered something for everyone.

The festival was patriotically opened over the VE Anniversary weekend with a rousing performance of great swing sound classics by the 'Railway Swing Band', a local group from Deal under the baton of Dave White.

The weekend continued by remembering and honouring those who achieved peace and gave their lives during the war years. In recognition of this memorable occasion remembrance services, including wreath-laying ceremonies, were held in Dover, Deal and Sandwich.

This was followed by a Grand Reunion, aptly titled 'We'll Meet Again', held at Dover Town Hall and enjoyed by an audience of over 200. Peter Booth of the Dover Operatic and Dramatic Society, performed with his band and provided the entertainment for the evening which involved an enthusiastic sing-along with rather energetic 'flag-waving'. In conjunction with this special event, the beacon was lit at Dover Castle by the Dover branch of the Royal British Legion as part of their programme of local activities.

The themes recognised at national level to celebrate VE Day included 'international reconciliation and the

coming together of Europe', and 'youth, and the advantages gained by succeeding generations from victory'.

Dover welcomed and played host to young international visitors from the U.S.A: the Montebello High School Band who presented a tribute concert at this year's 'Teddy Bears' Reunion', and the Washington High School Steel Band who provided a crescendo of music in celebration of the 50th anniversary of VE Day.

Artistic talents were also displayed by local young people. Daytime musical concerts were presented by the students of Dover College. Their Jazz Band accompanied locally renowned jazz entertainer, Ian Shawcross, in a Festival of Jazz at the White Cliffs Experience, and Dai Fujikura, a budding concert pianist and composer, played a melody of musical pieces at a special lunch-time event held at the College. The exciting and creative world of dance brought the streets of Dover alive in a series of outdoor entertainment, provided by dance champions "Instep Youth Dance Company" and in addition, the young people of Folkestone Youth Centre.

The Festival programme this year was extensive, with more than 100 events being staged during the two weeks. This was only made possible through the generous support offered by local businesses and organisations, and the enthusiastic involvement of local events organisers and promoters. Overall the Festival attracted in excess of 10,000 people with a marked increase in attendances at events during the festival fortnight.

The continued support and encouragement given by the members of the Dover Society since the first Festival of Dover is fully recognised and appreciated by the Festival Committee, who look forward to the Society's continuous commitment.

The Festival of Dover continues to be a joint initiative between Kent County Council and Dover District Council. The members of

the Festival Committee were Gavin Wright 85 and Peter Ryan (K.C.C.), and Kim Norton, Donna Sowerby and Sarah Pascoe (D.D.C.).

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## Reviews

*Commemorating VE Day eight of our members have contributed reviews of some of the events within the programme*

# The Railway Swing Band

## in Concert at Nye Hall on 7th May

The first concert of this year's Dover Festival was held at Nye Hall at the Duke of York's School on 7th May. It was a perfect summer evening for a concert in such a setting and in the interval the audience spilled out onto the lawns of the campus and enjoyed the cool air and the refreshments provided.

The choice of the Railway Swing Band was a popular one and most appropriate for the occasion, evoking memories of the war years and the swing era generally. Most of the band members are service trained musicians, coming from the RAF, Army and the Royal Marines School of Music, now all playing for local amateur bands. Some play for the The Broadstairs and St. Peter's band and some for the Betteshanger Brass Band. They perform regularly at the Deal Memorial Bandstand. The band is so named because the musicians rehearse in the back room of The Railway Public House, Walmer.

On this occasion the concert started with "In The Mood", followed by "Moonlight Serenade" and "Pennsylvania 65000". In each half of the concert was a section of four songs featuring the vocalist, Tony Martin, with popular renderings of songs such as "Fly Me To The Moon", "That Old Black Magic" and his last choice of "New York, New York," which brought down the house.

The concert proceeded through a wealth of old favourites to the Victory in Europe Finale, when the audience joined in singing with gusto "The White Cliffs of Dover" and "We'll Meet Again", accompanied by waving of Union Jacks. After each member of the band had taken his or her individual bow to enthusiastic applause, the audience demanded several encores before they finally allowed the band to bring the concert to an end.

MERRIL LILLEY

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## DODS "Mikado"

If I was asked to choose one adjective to describe the sixth DODS Mikado I would say that it was exuberant.

There is a lot to be said in general for amateur productions of Gilbert and Sullivan. Above all is preservation from the clever cleverness of some of today's despotic and self-indulgent

producers. There was a recent production in Canterbury (by the revived D'Oyley Carte company, of all people) where the new-look originality of the producer added nothing, in fact detracted, from the fun inherent in the work.

The DODS productions begin as a group of people who are enjoying themselves and this production radiated enjoyment. The acting of all the principals was contemporary in that it made the comedy of 1885 relevant to us.