

The Future of Dover Castle

A large and superb colour print of Dover Castle enhanced the stage of St. Mary's Hall at our March Meeting. This was a useful backdrop to the evening's address by Ken Scott, the General Manager of Dover Castle for English Heritage. This fast-talking, enthusiastic Yorkshire man, now resident in the castle, has promised to bring Dover Castle into the first line of tourist attractions with the improvements planned for the castle by English Heritage in 1998.

Statistically Stonehenge has been the best revenue earner for English Heritage, said Mr. Scott, with Dover Castle a close second. In 1998 Dover Castle will be in the forefront of their planning.

-Mr Scott outlined many of the proposed improvements, some of which are already in progress.

THE KING HENRY II KEEP

This centrepiece of the castle is already getting priority with extensive repairs to the roof and stone work. It is expected that the work will be finished in 1998. The Keep will be used for exhibitions and special events every weekend.

CAR PARKING AND ACCESS

The future plan is most ingenious to provide car parking on the newly-purchased land at Broadlees Bottom, with access to the castle via FitzWilliam Gate. It was also planned to run a 72ft land train, consisting of a Land Rover pulling two trailers, to provide a shuttle service within the castle grounds.

SECRET WARTIME TUNNELS

This is the new marketing name for "Hellfire Corner". The tunnels and castle together are an important package marketed by English Heritage and has become their second

biggest attraction. Already there are over 300,000 visitors a year

The tunnels have already had a great deal of money spent on them. Last year the hospital level was made available to visitors.

QUESTION TIME

There was some discussion of links between town and castle, with taxi services or shuttle buses.

Mr. Scott said that **THE OFFICERS' MESS** has had £1,000,000 spent on repair and that it is hoped it will be a hotel and conference centre.

The audience were pleased to learn that **QUEEN ELIZABETH I's POCKET PISTOL** is back at the castle and on view in the N.A.F.F.I. block.

At the end of the talk we felt that the prospects for our castle, our heritage, are most encouraging for the future.