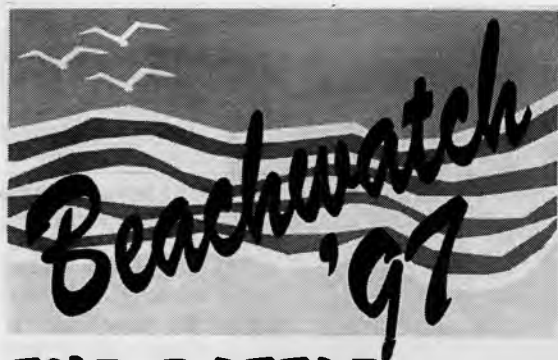




THE BATTLE FOR THE BEACHES

DOVER'S SHAKESPEARE BEACH received the attention of the Dover Society on Saturday, 20th September, a beautiful sunny morning and just the ticket for a spot of beach-combing, chat and *joie de vivre*. Though very tempted we were far too busy to indulge in a 'dip'.

It will be remembered that the Society was last here in 1994, beachcombing with Aycliffe School during the Civic Trust Environment Week. This return visit was on the occasion of Beachwatch '97, an annual beach survey by the Marine Conservation Society, now in its fifth year of scouring more than 250 beaches in Britain and over ninety other countries: marine pollution is a global problem.

The survey gathers information that gives help to an international campaign to stop dumping at sea, to reduce leakage from sewage outfalls and to raise awareness of the impact of marine debris on wildlife, and human health and tourism.

The Dover Society, in partnership with Dover District Council

and Dover Town Council, fielded a team of thirteen member volunteers to give support to this worthy cause. BBC Radio Kent's Ian Harkness, whilst interviewing a Dover Society spokesman in a live programme on the morning of the event, kindly gave up-to-the-minute weather information as a sunny on-shore breeze, moderate sea and tide state – and so it was!



After this commemorative shot – all ready for the off!

Descending the steps at Sunny Corner and following a quick briefing, the syndicates were on their way, collecting, identifying and listing all the pollutants on the data sheet provided.

Not many people know it, but driftwood and seaweed are not classed as official rubbish as they provide a habitat for wildlife and together form an integral part of the beach eco-system.

Generally we agreed it was an enjoyable and thirst-provoking outing though (quite pleasantly) tiring. We collected about sixty bags of litter, approximately 350 kg (700 lbs, say) on an estimated 800m stretch of beach.

Additionally a fair number of large 'unbagable' items were also collected.

One enterprising syndicate did its own thing, magnificently collecting no less than

420 plastic drinking containers.

This beautiful beach with its not inconsiderable history of work and recreation continues as a valuable though much under-used public amenity.



Work in progress!

As we approach the millennium the time has come for Shakespeare Beach, a Dover "lung" for hundreds of years, to be given a new and imaginative focus.



The end a most rewarding day