

The Objectives of the Dover Society

founded in 1988.

- to promote high standards of planning and architecture
- to interest and inform the public in the geography, history, archaeology, natural history and architecture of the area
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- and commitment to the belief that a good environment is a good investment.

The area we cover comprises the parishes or wards of Barton, Buckland, Castle, Lydden, Temple Ewell, Maxton, Pineham, Priory, River, St. Radigund's, Town & Pier and Tower Hamlets.

All members receive three Newsletters a year and in each year the Committee organises about ten interesting events - talks, tours, visits, Members' Meetings and usually a Christmas Feast.

The Society gives Awards for improvements to the area, monitors planning proposals and supports, joins in or initiates civic projects and arts events.

Editorial

On 27th March, 1998, the Dover Society held its 10th Annual General Meeting, celebrating ten successful years of its existence. The tenth year saw several changes in the composition of the committee. Jack Woolford, Chairman from the beginning, stepped down, to be replaced by Jeremy Cope, recently retired and with time on his hands. (He denies this!) Jennifer Gerrard, Treasurer for five of the ten years, also stepped down, her post taken by Capt. Mike Weston, also recently retired and able to devote some time to Society affairs. Jack has taken on the job of Chairman of the Planning Committee and has written his first report in this new capacity. Jennifer remains a member of the general committee, which also welcomed a new member, Derek Leach.

The most striking news to report in this issue is the massive investment Dover Harbour Board is making in Dover's future. Projects include the building of a second cruise terminal, expansion of the yacht marina, completion of the third stage of de Bradelai Wharf shopping complex and the development of the Old Park barracks site. These are all reported here in articles by John Gerrard and Keith Southey of Dover Harbour Board. To quote John Gerrard, "Things really are buzzing just now" for the Harbour Board.

Looking back at the last ten years in Dover, one can perceive a gradual improvement in the town, at first almost imperceptible, then escalating in the three years of Impact's residency and now, in 1998, accelerating apace, with parts of the town boasting a totally new look from their 1988 appearance. We believe that the Dover Society has played its own small part in the town's regeneration.

The report from the Chairman of the Projects Sub-Committee indicates how this section of the Society always gives valuable support to local schemes to conserve the environment and improve the town. Their latest success has been the work of the refurbishment of signposts in the town, reported in this issue. Those who got up at the crack of dawn at weekends, often in bad

weather, to undertake the preparation and the painting, are greatly commended. Even when they had finished they used the surplus black and gold paint to spruce up the leopard bollards at the Castle Hill/ Connaught Park junction, a prime tourist spot.

A regular report in the August Newsletter is that of the Dover Arts Festival, now in its fifth year and going from strength to strength. Lisa Webb has written this year's review, which indicates the growing popularity of the Festival and the hard work and commitment of all those involved.

Apparently my idea of a four-page pull-out section in Newsletter 31 was not as well-received as I expected. Some members did not detach the section and did not apply for trips in time. I hope this did not contribute to the cancellation of the

Romney Marsh trip due to lack of support. I had thought it would be a very popular outing. Anyway, we are reverting to the traditional method of loose leaf application forms. Enclosed are forms for the September trip to London and for the Christmas Feast in December.

The first meeting of the Autumn will be on 19th October at St. Mary's Parish Centre with two speakers, Lesley Cumberland and Terry Sutton. We hope to see many members there and to greet those who have joined the Society this year. Committee members are getting used to the idea of wearing their badges, so look out for those you want to meet. A full programme for the rest of this year is given, as usual, on the inside of the back cover.

Many thanks to contributors, proof readers and advertisers and best wishes to all our readers.

Snail Rail

Jeremy Cope

Did anyone read a report in the KM Extra in 4th April issue entitled "London Trains have to make way for Eurostar"? Peter Stratton from Connex, the train operators for the South East, spoke to Dover Town Centre Management and confirmed what we all know. Trains to Dover make way for the Channel Tunnel rail traffic and travelling to London is now worse than it has ever been with times extended by up to 20 minutes. It was unclear whether we would get new rolling stock or if Shakespeare Tunnel's width would mean that we are stuck with what is already some of the oldest rolling stock currently in use. No prizes for guessing the most likely outcome.

I had to laugh at this report. The operators are working hard to attract more customers! Initiatives include cheap family fares to Hastings and cycle hire in Canterbury. What good this will do for London travellers is hard to imagine. Perhaps they can draw comfort in the long journey with the thought that the railway is run by a load of comedians! Terry Sutton, who attended the meeting, tells me the TCM audience went along ready to tackle Mr Stratton. However he disarmed them all by admitting how dreadful things are.

When discussing this with Mike Weston he recalled attending a Dover meeting addressed by Nicholas Ridley, the former government minister. Ridley became very angry when no one in the audience believed him that the Channel Tunnel would bring us better rail services.

What if the busiest passenger port in the country and the busiest cruise terminal in Europe should generate more rail traffic? Government policy is to shift traffic from roads to rail. If the Channel Tunnel faces another breakdown will Eurostar come thundering into Dover? At least we know that Connex South East has contingency plans - passengers will be re-routed to Hastings on cheap family fares or sent by rail to Canterbury where they will hire bicycles to complete their journeys.

