

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.

