

**Kent Federation of Amenity Societies
33rd AGM and SPRING CONFERENCE
WHITSTABLE • MAY 30**

AGONISING REAPPRAISAL

Jack Woolford

The 33rd AGM was admirably hosted by the WHITSTABLE SOCIETY. There were 70 participants including five members of the Dover Society. The meeting ratified the Federation's policy changes as canvassed by Editor Ron Pennells, who lamented lack of contact with Member Societies, in Bulletin No 4. Consequently, in addition to bimonthly bulletins, which are beginning to attract responses from Member Societies, the Conference programme has been reorganised. Another suggestion, an amendment of the Constitution to separate the AGM from the Spring Conference, with detailed sectional reports, amendments, composite resolutions etc, was rejected because Member Societies, whose main concerns are properly and intensely local, would not be attracted. The Spring and Autumn Conferences concentrate on broader county and national issues which also impinge on local amenity society concerns. Amongst these have recently figured An Integrated Transport Policy and the (further) Modernisation of Local Government, both addressed to the Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

The accession to Vice-Presidency of Sir Crispin Tickell, GCMG, KCVO, who is not only Chancellor of the University of Kent at Canterbury, a distinguished diplomat and environmentalist of world-wide stature, but also environmental adviser to our Prime Minister and his two immediate predecessors, was warmly welcomed. It is hoped that Sir Crispin will address a future Conference on "Local Solutions to Global Problems"

Spring Conference programme - a report on two speeches.

Relations between amenity societies and local authorities naturally vary between the cordial and the cantankerous. Canterbury is presumably unique in having a measure of council funding. Information and comment from other places (including Dover) is needed!

The first speaker, Dr Frank Panton CBE, of the CANTERBURY CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE, said that Canterbury City Council had a good Conservation Department which had excellent relations with the five constituent local amenity groups: St Peter's Association, Oaten Hill & District (KFAS member) Society, Wincheap Society, New Dover Road Society and St. Stephen's Society. The City Council partly funded the Committee, consults it on all relevant planning applications, and sometimes accepted its advice despite the pressures of tourism.

The Marlowe Theatre was, in relation to the Cathedral, in the wrong position but Council efforts to improve access for theatrical pantechnicians had been successfully resisted and the Council persuaded to adopt Park and Ride rather than a Multi-storey Car Park on Pound Lane. Whereas the Cafe Rouge "restoration" of one very old building was unfortunate, another restoration, now leased to Ask Pizza House, was superb. The Tannery Allotments had been saved from becoming a multi-storey car, lorry and coach park, but St Peter's Place cul-de-sac had become a transport artery, with its front gardens covered in concrete. Three million visitors per annum and the street hawkers' barrows they attracted inevitably obstructed the city centre, which also housed many of the 15,000 university

students who, in terms of noise and upkeep were not ideal tenants. Dr Panton's advice to amenity societies was: "Don't sympathise with the Developers!"

The second speaker, on LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS, was Peter Mills of ENGLISH HERITAGE who outlined the history of listing, from advisory to mandatory status, and from individual buildings to conservation areas. Government guidance in PPG15 now gives priority to area interest and character, although recent legal rulings make external alterations to buildings less difficult than formerly. English Heritage is available as Statutory Consultee. The need to find economic solutions to preservation increases. Lists of buildings at risk (*including the Drop Redoubt and the Waldershare Tower*) have been compiled but sympathetic uses providing an economic return on necessary investment is both difficult and contentious.

Review Capt. Mike Weston

FERRY PORT DOVER

By John Hendy

Over the years John Hendy has been involved in writing various specialist publications on the subject of ferries and their operations from Dover and Folkestone. 'Ferry Port Dover' is different from previous publications in that it is a 129 page book, which dovetails the entire growth of the car ferry operation with the growth of the port operation and explains the dependency of each upon the other.

It is a book which charts progress from the start in 1928 of the first vehicle ferry where cars had to be lifted on and off by crane, taking a long time for turn rounds, through the various stages of ship and port development, to the present day super ferries which load and discharge vast amounts of traffic in very short turn round times over purpose built double deck link spans.

John Hendy has put together a book, which cannot fail to interest anyone who has a desire to know why Dover has succeeded in establishing itself as one of the premier, if not the premier, ferry port in the world. It is a book filled with statistics obtained from many sources and a book full of knowledgeable facts gained by John Hendy from conversations with people he has met during his years of

association with the port of Dover working both ashore and afloat. Through these statistics and conversations the reader is taken through the way philosophies and politics of the various shipping companies dictated the way they individually developed and benefited from the seemingly insatiable desire for travel. The reader is shown that the requirements of the shipping operators for port developments were acted upon slowly at first by the Dover Harbour Board, but eventually, because of their close association with Dover Harbour Board, the port infrastructure was to keep pace with the quickening speed of ship development. 'Ferry Port Dover' clearly indicates that the shadow of the Channel Tunnel, which has loomed over Dover for decades, at first stifled investment, but that investment took off when the go ahead for the building of the tunnel was given. Consequently we now have a port and industry of which we in Dover should be justly proud and one which has given the Channel Tunnel 'food for thought'.

This book is not only filled with statistics but has many interesting photographs of old and new ships and photographs of the port as it was and as it is now. For myself, having just come to the end of 31 years working out of the port, 'Ferry Port Dover' vividly demonstrates what has been achieved and how it has been achieved in the port of Dover since travel by car and coach and the carriage of freight by road took off several decades ago.