

This and That

DOVER CHAT

Apparently the last Newsletter gave members plenty to chat about. The discussion on whether or not the Zeebrugge Bell should be moved, created something of a furore, with some members strongly opposed to the suggestion and others eager to put forward suggestions. David Atwood (December Newsletter) believes that the present position of the bell does not do justice to the heroic event that it commemorates and suggested a location at the end of the Prince of Wales Pier. The Society sees one of its roles as providing a forum for ideas on the betterment of the town, even if they may be controversial, and thanks David for his letter.

"Budge" Adams favoured the idea of moving the bell just a short distance, to the top of the low building adjoining the Maison Dieu and overlooking the War Memorial and the library. This notion was also put forward by Joe Harman, who had the ingenious idea of superimposing a photograph of the bell on to a photograph of the building. It looked quite at home there! Both felt that there would be ample space for the public to view the bell at closer quarters than at present without causing any inconvenience to passers-by.

However, it soon became apparent that there were countless, if not insurmountable, difficulties to be faced. Jack Woolford, in his planning report, mentions the long discussions held by the committee. The Maison Dieu is a listed building. The siting of the bell is steeped in history and tradition. Some Doverians, like Mrs. Dorothy Bushell (see her letter in this issue), were strongly against any move. We have not abandoned the issue. It is still not sure whether the bell will rest, and ring, in its present location or whether, in the future, it may find a more

suitable one.

Our secretary, Leo Wright, has received a letter from a film company called BROOK LAPPING, which has recently started production on *FINEST HOUR*, a four part series about the events of 1940. The film is to include "vivid and dramatic stories of personal experiences told through interviews, diaries and other contemporary sources". One of the stories was about the American journalists who stayed at the Grand Hotel during 1940 and wrote about a "red hair barmaid called Josephine who showed great spirit". The film makers wanted to track down Josephine and also to talk to anyone who had stayed in the caves in the cliffs which served as air raid shelters. I understand their appeal has had some success and that several of our members have been helping them with their inquiries.

Jon Iveson's latest article is about the Mote's Bulwark at East Cliff. Last year I acquired a very pleasing oil painting of the Mote's Bulwark from one of our advertisers, Alan Fordham, of Fordham Antiques in Deal. Alan had found the painting in a house clearance. The painting was obviously old, jagged at the edges and wrapped in newspaper. We took it to be framed at another of our advertisers, Deborah Colam, of Castle Fine Arts in Castle Street, Dover. Deborah thought the painting should be dated in the first decades of the last century and speculated it could have been done by a gifted amateur, perhaps an officer stationed at the site. A lucky find for us and thanks to Alan and Deborah.

I was hoping for more ideas from members about the Society's plans for the Millennium. It is not too late if you have any suggestions to make.

Editor