

8 THE 11th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

April 19th, 1999 . . . Reported by May Jones

An impressive gathering filled the hall at St. Mary's Parish Centre on April 19th with, in the front row, our President, Brigadier Maurice Atherton, a "pride of vice-presidents" in Jonathan Sloggett, Lillian Kay, Peter Johnson and Budge Adams and our guest Lady Mary Jarrett.

Chairman Jeremy Cope began his report on a sombre note recording the deaths of three members during the year and the recent death of Ivan Green's wife, for all of whom we stood as a mark of respect.

The Chairman said he intended to be as brief as possible in his resume of the past year's events and the challenges of the year ahead.

The current membership of 413 was creditable but constant effort was needed to maintain this. Sadly John and Jennifer Gerrard, two key figures since the Society's inception would be leaving the district now that John had retired.

Finances had improved slightly with Pfizer's sponsorship of the December Newsletter, although the cost of the Millennium Plaques Project would deplete funds shortly - in a valuable way, however, by calling to the attention of residents and visitors various aspects of the town's history.

The social programme had been very successful thanks to Joan Liggett. The Newsletter maintained its high standard under Merrill Lilley's editorship. Both these helped to maintain our membership. John Owen and Jack Woolford were commended for their success, hard work and diligence, John in projects and Jack in planning.

Continental links had been maintained and strengthened. The Chairman mentioned the Norwegian plaque dedication and, at a personal level, the friendship of Budge Adams with the Norwegian contacts, the Calais Trip and the attendance of French guests at the Christmas Feast.

Committee members had attended various Town Council meetings and had been invited to speak. Our activities and comments continued to be reported in the local press and to be broadcast on local radio. Thanks were due to Terry Sutton, our Press Secretary.

Two members were to be congratulated, David Atwood for encouraging the discussion on the location of the Zeebrugge Bell and Martyn Webster for his initiative in organising the tour of local cemeteries in June.

The Society's Millennium Project of commemorative plaques was high on the committee's agenda. Jon Moir had advised Jeremy that the problem of insurance on DDC buildings would be resolved. This item reminded the speaker of finance and brought him to the Treasurer's Report.

Treasurer, Mike Weston, assured us that copies of the accounts had been circulated to most members present. He reported a successful year, with the General Fund now standing at £5588.22.

All our social events were in profit, more than covering the losses in the previous year. Money from raffles totalled £433.20, a creditable £74.52 increase over the previous year. Thanks were expressed to Sheila Cope and her helpers for making this possible.

The Treasurer said that when he took over from Jennifer Gerrard he knew that the biggest task was the financing of the Newsletter, which in the past had benefited greatly from the fact that Budge Adams had done all the page setting until December 1997. Since then the cost of the Newsletter had been £800 per issue, outstripping our present income from subscriptions. Sponsors were being sought and last year we were fortunate in receiving a contribution of £400 from Pfizers for the December 1998 issue. In addition, in the last financial year advertising brought in another £499 and Merrill Lilley and her

husband, Bruce, our Advertising Manager, were thanked for their dedication and commitment in attracting the advertising revenue to keep the Newsletter viable.

Administrative costs were down slightly again, due to dedicated people working for the Society but claiming no expenses. During the year seven donations had been made to the following organisations; St. Mary's Bells Appeal, Crabble Corn Mill Trust, Christmas Tree Lights Appeal, Carnival programme, Dover Pageant, Countdown to Millennium Fund, Buckland Hospital League of Friends (£51 from raffles held on coach trips) and to Dover College Music Department, as a thank you for the entertainment provided by their choir at the Christmas Feast. All these costs came out of the General Fund. The Projects Fund and Publication Fund were also within the accounts and the figures were given on the back page.

The millennium project of erecting historic plaques had been delayed but it was expected that a start would be made in the coming months and that last year's surplus would help to finance it.

The Chairman then asked four members with special responsibilities to report on their work.

Editor Merril Lilley thanked all those who helped in any way with the Newsletter: - proof readers May Jones and Pam Taylor, stalwarts of many years standing, Budge Adams, who continued to supply envelopes, print labels, supervise distribution and print inserts, Bruce Lilley, Advertising Manager, and all the advertisers for their support, the distributors who delivered envelopes to your door and, lastly, the most important people, those who wrote the articles and reports. Without them there would be no Newsletter.

John Owen reported on the year's projects, details of which had appeared in the relevant Newsletters; the signposts, the beer race, St. Edmund's Chapel maintenance, oak planting in National Tree Week and the recent environmental clean-up by the cadets. Four displays had

been mounted in the Town Council office windows and one at the Dover Film Festival. Two summer projects for which help was needed were the Dover Pageant and the WCCP Summer Visitor Survey on the Western Heights. In conclusion John had a personal thank you for all members who bravely volunteered and turned out whatever the weather.

Joan Liggett likewise expressed her thanks to those who attended meetings, joined excursions and helped with refreshments, with especial thanks to Mike Weston, Muriel Golding and Sybil Standing. Joan said she was always willing to accept suggestions from members for any events they would like her to arrange.

Jack Woolford gave the Planning Committee report with obvious enjoyment. He said that all planning applications to DDC were examined and the Committee's opinions given, although not always agreed. He gave many examples, of which members will have read in his regular reports in the Newsletter.

Then our President, Brigadier Maurice Atherton, made the farewell speech to John and Jennifer Gerrard on their retirement from the Committee, saying this was a sad occasion and that their departure would be a considerable loss to Dover and to the Dover Society. Jennifer had been Treasurer from 1993 to 1998 and, although he was slightly afraid of her, he knew that she worked on the principle of looking after the pennies and the pounds would take care of themselves. John had been a founder member and a vice-president since the Society's inauguration in 1988. Both the Gerrards had been a tower of strength, good-humoured, articulate, straightforward people with sound common sense. He warmly thanked them for their years of service, as he presented them with three pictures, two Victorian prints of Dover and a photograph of Connaught Park where they walked their dogs.

John replied, saying that it had been a good week for collecting views of Dover, as Jonathan Sloggett had arranged for them to receive a painting of the sea front. He was

10 looking forward to hearing what Jonathan was going to say in his speech, as he was one of the country's experts on port economics and planning.

He continued with some amusing anecdotes of his time with the Dover Society, including his memory of Arctic training under the direction of John Owen, painting road signs in the Market Square at 6am with the temperature about 10 degrees below zero. Every morning on his way to work he had felt satisfaction at seeing the Rolls statue in its elegant new location on the Gateway lawns, the result of great effort in the face of much red tape. His work towards the redesigning and layout of the Peverley book on the Western Heights had been equally satisfying, for it had proved highly successful and was making money for the Society. Sourcing clay for the lining of Lydden Pond had been an interesting exercise and had been highly beneficial to the local duck population. He had happy memories of strawberries and fizz at an event at Dover College. He had once collected 832 plastic bottles on a clean-up of Shakespeare beach. The memories were endless. It was difficult for them to say goodbye to such a nice bunch of people. They had made permanent friendships. He could only say thank you to everyone present.

Elections followed with the minimum of formality and, there being no other business, members were free to chat, drink and support the customary raffle.

After the interval the Chairman introduced the speaker, Jonathan Sloggett, Managing Director of Dover Harbour Board since 1983, giving a brief resume of his

career and the importance of the work of DHB for the town of Dover.

His subject was: THE FUTURE OF DOVER HARBOUR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRANSPORT.

The speaker asked a number of questions and then went on to try to answer them. What was behind the present number of DHB berths? What factors would influence traffic in the next 25 years? And on what would Dover's success depend? In the analysis of the port's past success he concentrated mainly on road access and general economic conditions, with reference to a statistical table showing figures from 1974 onwards. He described the problems faced in 1974 when there was no A20 or M20 and the A2 ended at Brenley Corner, with all town traffic using Lydden Hill and driving through the town.

The table shows the incredible increase in traffic between 1974 and 1999; passenger numbers from 6 million to 9 million; road haulage vehicles by 500%; ferry entries by 10,000.

What factors would influence trade in the future? Freight would originate from a broader range of countries as the EU grew. There might be a future for road/rail freight but international rail freight was likely to grow only slowly. For the first half of the next 25 year period certainly road haulage would dominate. It was likely there would be increased leisure use of the ferries for holidays. The table showed projected increases in all areas.

What of port capacity? What if all the projected increases were to happen? To cope with 32,000 ferry entries in 2009 berths must be modernised and two new

PORT OF DOVER	1974	1999	Change	Annual Change	Annual Forecast	2009	2024
Passengers (million)	6	19	217%	4.7%	2.5%	24	35
Tourist Vehicles (million)	0.9	3.5	289%	5.6%	2.5%	4.5	6.5
Road Haulage Vehicles (mill)	0.25	1.5	500%	7.4%	5.0%	2.4	5.1
Ferry Entries (thousand)	16	26	63%	2.0%	2.0%	32	43
DHB Employees	650	771	19%	0.7%	1.0%	852	989

The statistical chart referred to by speaker Jonathan Sloggett

ones built. Non-essential work would have to be done out of the port, fiscal clearance done at Southern House, procedures streamlined. At a later date another major terminal would be needed and this could only be west of Admiralty Pier. Would it be possible to increase cruise traffic?

So many questions! As Dover was a trust port the government was likely to make the ultimate decision on what would happen, bearing in mind the town's proximity to

Europe. Time would tell.

After such a stimulating talk questions followed in quick succession; about the Channel Tunnel, the need for more berths, the future of the Hover and Sea Cat, rail freight, the growth of the marina.

In moving the vote of thanks, Jack Woolford commented on the excellent relations the Society had with the Harbour Board. With Jonathan Sloggett in charge he knew it was in good hands.

KENT FEDERATION OF AMENITY SOCIETIES

34th AGM & SPRING CONFERENCE

Jack Woolford

On April 24th 1999 we were welcomed by the Mayor of Maidstone in the splendidly refurbished Town Hall and superbly hosted by MAIDSTONE CIVIC SOCIETY (Chairman Dr. Brian White) with the latest in visual and auditory technology, the best of haute cuisine and four excellent addresses.

The Chairman reported that although effectively operative and solvent, the Federation had lost the services of the Membership Secretary, the resignation of the General Secretary was pending, there was no Vice-chairman and there were three other vacancies on the Executive Committee. Computer-literate volunteers would indeed be welcome.

The first address was by S. Sangha, Gravesend Town Centre Coordinator and Director of the Association of Town Centre Management. Town Centre management was a well organised partnership between the community, business and local government to answer the challenge to town centres posed by out-of-town regional shopping centres like "Lakeside" and "Bluewater". In 1991 Gravesend's main shopping street was more a place for vehicles and cars than for people. In order to compete, town centres must offer

comparable shopping, safety and security, be bright and cheerful and easy to explore. They must be welcoming and friendly to all whether coming on foot, by public transport or by car (including free parking). There must be no graffiti, flyposting or piles of rubbish. Housing for those who worked in the town centre should be of such a quality that the lures of suburban or rural estates would be resisted. Government Regeneration Grants were available, as were the resources of English Heritage for Listed Buildings. *(Dover has a similar problem. The Dover Society awaits the new Dover Town Centre managerial appointment with interest and commitment.)*

Professor Brian May, Chairman of the RAMSGATE SOCIETY, sang the praises of going on the Internet, a worldwide web of intercommunication to which entry was now free. He instanced examples of assistance for local history research and of world-wide publicity eg for the RAMSGATE SOCIETY's 500-PAGE MILLENNIUM BOOK PROJECT but I was not convinced that either the DOVER SOCIETY or the KENT FEDERATION, whose concerns are intensely and properly local, would benefit. Websites