

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

12 may be free but access to them is charged at local telephone rates and is time and effort consuming.

Addresses followed on "Sustainable Shopping" and "Kent's Waste Problems Solved" on which, Editor permitting, I shall subsequently report. Meanwhile the MANSTON AIRPORT'S ACTION GROUP REPORT of APRIL 1999 is relevant to DOVER...

"In 1987 Kent International Airport was created on an 8 acre site, leased to Seabourne Aviation. The proposal was for 0.5m passengers and 100,000 tonnes of freight per annum. There was a lot of local opposition and Thanet District Council was less supportive than now. An Environmental Impact map predicted seriously intrusive noise contours particularly to Ramsgate schools (six on the flight path) and hospitals. Manston air corridors were already overcrowded because they are so close to the beacon at Dover, and finding more statutory 5-mile slots between aircraft would be difficult. Stacking would be over Dover, and Ramsgate and St Nicholas would suffer from landing noise."

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

'RAISE'

Regional Action & Involvement South East
Although we have not been officially informed, KEAS and the DOVER SOCIETY are invited to join (FREE!) this organisation which aims to create a south-east network of voluntary organisations anticipating the proposed regionalisation of local government; SEEDA, the South East England Development Agency (which already exists); SEERA, the (to be nominated) South East England Regional Assembly; and GOSE (Government Office for the South East: already in Guildford). The Dover Society is very critical of this: see article on SERPLAN on p.5 of April 1999 Newsletter.

However, forewarned is forearmed, so we shall join.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Reflections on the Zeebrugge Bell

At the conclusion of the Town Hall service on St. George's Day, 23rd April, a lady at the back of the crowd shouted- "Don't move the bell". This was, of course, the same sentiment expressed by Dorothy Bushell in her letter to the Dover Express last February, later printed in the April Newsletter. She has since admitted to me that she had never read what I had originally written about why the bell should be moved.

Although I can understand the feelings of both these ladies, I could not help but feel, as I came away from the Town Hall that probably more eyes had looked up at the bell in the last five minutes than in the last 12 months.

When the Zeebrugge Bell was presented to the people of Dover in 1920 and placed upon the high balcony of the Town Hall, it would have been a most suitable site. The events of the raid and the aftermath had been vividly etched into the minds of everyone in Dover because it had taken place only two years previously. Now, with the passing of time, some 80 years later the situation is very different.

I realise now there would be many legal and planning difficulties, as well as the cost, which make the moving of the bell impractical and that a suitable and informative plaque below the present one, which gives little detail and is placed too high, is the best compromise.

However, it is a good thing to remember that any monument, war memorial, gravestone, plaque, or, as in the case of the bell, trophy, is part of the fabric of our history. They are like signposts pointing to the past, commemorating a life, an event or a sacrifice. It is important that such signposts can be clearly seen.

David Atwood