

The  
Dover  
Society

# Newsletter

No. 35

August 1999



The 'Repertor', winning barge in the Bowsprit Class in the Annual Medway Barge Match, May 1999



# THE DOVER SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1988

Registered with the Civic trust, Affiliated to the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies  
Registered Charity No. 299954

## PRESIDENT:

Brigadier Maurice Atherton

## VICE-PRESIDENTS:

A. F. Adams, Ivan Green, Peter Johnson, Miss Lillian Kay,  
Miss Philomena Kennedy, Peter Marsh  
The Rt. Hon. The Lord Rees, Jonathan Sloggett, Terry Sutton  
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Mike McFarnell and Sybil Standing

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## *The Objectives of the Dover Society*

*founded in 1988.*

- to promote high standards of planning and architecture
- to interest and inform the public in the geography, history, archæology, natural history and architecture of the area
- to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- and commitment to the belief that a good environment is a good investment.

The area we cover comprises the parishes or wards of Barton, Buckland, Castle, Lydden, Temple Ewell, Maxton, Pineham, Priory, River, St. Radigund's, Town & Pier and Tower Hamlets.

All members receive three Newsletters a year and in each year the Committee organises about ten interesting events – talks, tours, visits, Members' Meetings and usually a Christmas Feast.

The Society gives Awards for improvements to the area, monitors planning proposals and supports, joins in or initiates civic projects and arts events.

## Editorial

On 19th April 1999, the Dover Society held its eleventh Annual General Meeting, reported here by May Jones. The well-attended meeting was chaired by Jeremy Cope, his first AGM since assuming office. There were some changes in the Committee, with Terry Sutton and Derek Leach becoming joint vice-chairmen, John and Jennifer Gerrard retiring, and the addition of three new members, Hugh and Leslie Gordon and Glyn Hale.

After the Chairman's speech and the Treasurer's report, four committee members gave individual reports and our President, Brigadier Atherton, made a speech of farewell and thanks to the Gerrards and presented them with three pictures of Dover.

The speaker after the interval was Jonathan Sloggett, the Managing Director of Dover Harbour Board. His subject, 'The Future of Dover Harbour, with special reference to transport', was of great interest to members and engendered a lively discussion.

Also included in this issue are reports of the March Meeting, of the highly successful trip on a paddle steamer on the Medway in May and of the guided tour of Dover cemeteries in June.

Application forms are enclosed for the September trip to Heritage Open Days in Tonbridge and Malling and for the Christmas Feast on 18th December.

For the year 2000, our Social Secretary, Joan Liggett, is still in the process of planning the details of some of the programme. As you will see, from the inside back cover, the spring programme is in place but the summer outings are not yet finalised. We would like to thank members for all the helpful suggestions received during the discussion groups at the March meeting (see page 00) and we are hoping to implement some of these in next year's programme. More of this in the December Newsletter.

Mention must be made of two members of the Society who do not live in Dover but have close connections with the town and have made valuable contributions to the Society and to the Newsletter. Martyn Webster, who lives in Brighton, visited Dover in June to lead the fascinating tour of Dover cemeteries, reported here by Terry Sutton. David Atwood, who lives in Blackburn but is a regular visitor to Dover, has contributed his views on the Zeebrugge bell in a previous Newsletter and in this issue writes on the St George's Day ceremony in April 1999.

Thanks once again to Donna Sowerby for her report on this year's Dover Festival, to Jon Iveson for his latest article in the series on Dover's fortifications and to Ivan Green for his article, 'Two Twelfth Century Men', in his on-going series of glimpses into Dover's history. I feel that these two series by Jon and Ivan are features of the Newsletter which have become regular and popular offerings and members await eagerly to see what the next instalment will be.

Many members may also have been waiting, in anticipation, for the second instalment of Derek Leach's research into the history of Prospect House. His investigation had uncovered so much of interest that, as you may remember, it was impossible to include it all in Newsletter 34. Now he continues, with the story of the flamboyant Mrs Beresford Baker and the Day Star Mission. She must have been a much-discussed character in Dover!

We must apologise to members who ordered Newsletter binders. When we tried to order them we found that the firm was no longer in business, so we are trying to find a new supplier.

Budge Adams, who recently spent a month in hospital after breaking an ankle, is now home again and would like to thank everyone who visited him or sent cards and best wishes.

Please note the dates of the Dover Pageant, August 29th and 30th, and try to attend, or better still, ring John Owen and volunteer to help with the Society project.

Many thanks to all our contributors and advertisers.

## **DEADLINE for contributions**

The last date for the receipt of copy for issue 36 will be Monday 11th October 1999

The Editor welcomes contributions and interesting drawings or photographs. "Paper copy" should be typed at double spacing. Handwritten copy should be clear with wide line spacing. Accurate fully proof-read copy on computer discs is acceptable; please ring 01304 205254 to discuss details.

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*The work of the*

# PLANNING

*Sub-Committee*

Reported by JACK WOOLFORD, Chairman

The Zeebrugge Bell will stay where it is on Connaught Hall but the Society will provide, beneath it, an eye-level information display worded by Secretary Leo Wright and approved by member David Atwood who raised the question of relocation. He now suggests relocation of the Zeebrugge Grappling Iron now near the Prince of Wales Pier.

Refurbishment of buildings in the Conservation Area bordering on parts of London Road will by now have commenced with the prospect that the buildings on the opposite side whose cause Planning Committee member Margaret Robson proposed, before the English Heritage/DDC/DTC Regeneration initiative was revived, may be included. We welcome the support of the Dover Chamber of Commerce for this project. We also commend the Chambers revival of the proposed cableway from the White Cliffs Experience or St James to the Castle and to the Western Heights but will be surprised if English Heritage fails to veto it, as it did an earlier similar proposal which we also supported.

Dover District Council refuses to accept that the demolition of the Priory Road facade of the former GPO might create an undesirable precedent and no longer replies to our representations. We accept that emergency situations demand emergency responses and that the demolition was technically justified, but consider that an immediate public

explanation would have prevented misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

One of our members complained about the insertion of steps into the Godwyne Path but ultimately accepted that compromise must prevail in resolving complex and conflicting demands. Dover District Council has consequently persuaded the developer to install a handrail. We are pleased that the steps will deter cyclists and motorcyclists from (ab)using the path.

Similarly, we protested against the construction of a separate garage and road entrance to the Temple Ewell Nursing Home. We understand that the suggested compromise removes the garage and reduces the new entrance to a hard standing, and are happy to accept this.

We enjoyed the breakfast, at which all our suggestions were shot down, provided by Dover District Council to promote Town Centre Vision but await a response to our request for explanation of the provenance and financing of the concept. So far there has been none of the promised follow-up. Similarly we wonder what has happened to the Town Council's Public Art Project. We rejected the proposal for statues on the White Cliffs but understood that Connaught Park was to have a changing architectural exhibition.

We continue to press the Co-op, which had already repaired a fence at our suggestion, to clear rubbish from the riverside by B&Q. The question has been referred to "higher authority".

Our protest against the unsympathetic design of the new surgeries in London Road was ignored but we had no hesitation in approving DDC's proposals to improve St. Radigund's and Priory Wards.

# THE MARCH MEETING

5

15th MARCH 1999

## DOVER'S TRANSPORT PROBLEMS: A Talk by Gwyn Prosser

*Reported by Jack Woolford*

Introducing the speaker, Chairman Jeremy Cope said that although Gwyn Prosser was a Welshman he had lived and worked in Dover since 1979, on cross-Channel ferries and representing the Merchant Navy Officers Union, as well as sitting on Kent County and Dover District Councils.

Mr Prosser began by saying he had been a member of the Dover Society longer than he had been MP for Dover, the busiest ferry port in the world, with its 21million passengers per year, freight trade and other cargoes. As well as feeding the economy and providing jobs, Dover's flourishing trade brought responsibilities, problems and challenges including bootlegging and the crimes of drug smugglers, live animal exports and live animal export protesters. Protesting British farmers blockaded Dover and French seafarers and lorry drivers blockaded Calais (and other ports), all involving congestion and controversy. The National Front attacked asylum seekers and there were also issues of shipping safety and marine pollution. There was the setback of the increasing impact of the Channel Tunnel on ferry and port jobs, the loss of duty-free shopping and the possible loss of assisted area status. The loss of the Kent Coalfield, of freight-forwarding and customs, employment from the 1992 Single Market, and the repercussions of two recessions were still felt.

The July 1998 White paper on the Future of Transport necessarily envisaged radical solutions of integration and sustainability against the ideology of privatisation, unbridled competition and deregulation which had produced declining rail services and increased

congestion and pollution. £1.8 billion had been committed to bus and train system improvement, including local traffic management. A Strategic Railway Authority was being set up and there would be extra funds for roads and for improved walking and cycling facilities. A Commission for Integrated Transport was now establishing 150 Local Authority Integration Committees, with £150m extra funding for the next three years for rural bus partnerships. Provisional local transport plans were already being set up involving a large number of complementary measures. In addition, Dover was now an area for possible inclusion in a grant of £2.85m.

Mr Prosser said that his maiden speech in the House of Commons had been on Dover's dependence on transport for employment and the adverse circumstance of public subsidy, including a 4-lane motorway and the whole British rail network directly connected to the Channel Tunnel, leaving only a poor quality carriageway to the busiest ferry port in the world.

Since then, he thought, things had moved on, but not far enough. The extension of the M20/A20 from Folkestone to Dover and the decision to designate it the main transport corridor to E. Kent eased, but did not remove, the need to complete the dualling of the A2 from Lydden to Dover. Piecemeal A2 improvements, the new link to Sandwich and Thanet, and the prospective realignment of Whitfield roundabout and dualling of the link road to Old Park Barracks, would be improvements. The Government had frozen all road projects and many schemes had been abandoned, but the A2 project survived and awaited

6 decision by Serplan. Mr Prosser said he continued to press ministers, stressing economic regeneration, environmental considerations and safety. Even when a significant switch of freight from road to rail took place, the need for a second high quality road link to the port was clear. Mr Prosser is still campaigning for an extension of duty-free shopping but he did not support the disruptive tactics of the French campaigners and deplored the need to use the M20 as a glorified lorry park. This was, however, an improvement on the 1970s situation when all the lorries came through the town. Another barrier to economic growth had long been the railway bridge over Coombe Valley Road but it was now second only to the Sandwich Corridor in the County Council's priorities.

Mention of Dover's rail links normally provoked laughter and horror stories abounded. Four E. Kent MPs had recently raised the issue of Connex SE with Transport Minister Glenda Jackson, one of them inviting her, if she were a masochist, to experience the state of rails and unreliable timekeeping between London and Dover. She replied that she had wide interests, but masochism wasn't one of them! The rule observed for councils in E. Kent seeking to interest developers in projects was to send a car if they proposed to come by rail. Her response included the statements:

*".... Connex South Eastern..... is required by its franchise agreement to replace all its existing Mark I slam-door rolling stock. I understand that it is its intention that the brand-new 375 class rolling stock will be deployed on the route to Dover, via Sevenoaks-Ashford by the end of 1999. Railtrack, in partnership with Connex South Eastern is also in the process of carrying out major improvements to Dover Priory Station.. I shall write to my honourable friend about the proposed sale of rail lands.*

*The Government are keen to encourage an increase in the use of rail freight, thus delivering important environmental benefits by taking lorries off our roads. Rail freight*

*grants are available to help meet the extra costs associated with moving freight by rail."*

The Channel Tunnel Rail Link project had had a chequered history, with twists, turns and false starts. John Prescott had negotiated a rescue package last year: a decreased concession period and reduced public support, in the form of a loan, to the taxpayer's benefit. Mr Prosser had supported Dover Harbour Board and others in E. Kent's protest against public subsidy to the Channel Tunnel because the Shuttle was in direct competition with surface trains. The Rail Link was quite different. It would free up freight capacity and would offer better passenger and freight services, and would benefit the general economy of E. Kent. Eurostar passengers would not, in any case, travel by ferry and classic ferry foot passengers had ceased to make any significant contribution to ferry incomes. The High Speed Rail Link was not seen as a threat to the Port of Dover.

Our concern, he thought, should be the massive impending doubling of freight traffic over the next ten years and avoiding a second Channel Tunnel (which Dover needed like a hole in the head) as already envisaged in the first Channel Tunnel Act. Some local activists have consequently agitated for an extension of the HSRL from Folkestone to Dover, but this was totally unrealisable, bearing in mind the desperate earlier years of controversy about the location of the international passenger station between Folkestone and London. What was realisable was to bring the freight connections to Dover for train ferries, especially by containers and piggy-back services. High level discussions between the Harbour Board, Railtrack and Parliament were already occurring.

Mr. Prosser himself chaired the House of Commons Committee on ports. He said that upgrading the line for freight across the Warren and through existing tunnels to the Western Docks was feasible though it was a project for which we would have to fight.

# DISCUSSION GROUPS

After the interval the members and guests divided into groups to discuss the following topics:

## 1. TRANSPORT

Points arising from Gwyn Prosser's talk

## 2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Government proposes to create an English Regional Government in parallel with Welsh And Scottish devolution. The South East region, already a quango, comprises Oxfordshire, Beds., Berks., Surrey, Sussex and Kent, but excludes London. Does this make sense? It involves the removal of county councils and the creation of much larger unitary authorities. Can we afford it? Do we want it?

## 3. THE ZEEBRUGGE BELL

Should it be moved?

## 4. VISION OF THE TOWN CENTRE IN THE FUTURE

Opinions.

## 5. IDEAS FOR FUTURE OUTINGS AND SPEAKERS

better rolling stock, tunnels and fire doors. The A2 road link should be improved. Better railway stations and bus stations needed.

2. Three groups out of four did not want the new system. One group thought that London should be included in the S.E. region as all transport centres on London.

3. General agreement that the Bell should stay where it is, with a suitable information plaque at eye level.

4. Ideas and suggestions.

Open up the Market Square by demolishing some existing buildings.. Consider similar plans opposite the Town Hall. Demolish Burlington House. Introduce legislation to deal with dilapidated properties. Demolish telephone exchange. Develop Pencester gardens which are under-used. Improve after millennium bandstand built. Install a cafe. Make French market a regular feature. New uses for the White Cliffs Experience - Maritime Museum, English School, Theatre.

5. Ideas for outings.

Globe Theatre, Marlowe Theatre, Ypres, Lille, House of Commons, Hever Castle, Ightham Moat, Knole Park, Tenterden, wine tasting.

## RESPONSES

1. The unanimous opinion was that the services should be improved, that we need rail services we can rely on,

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

SUMMER 1999

The Society has recently been criticised for failure to attract young members. Certainly at our functions grey panthers rather than 'yoof' are represented. Your committee agonises about this situation. After all, who is to succeed us? Yet two specific efforts have largely failed. We are obliged reluctantly to accept that most people below retirement age have neither time nor energy for active commitment to societies such as ours.

All new members of any age are very welcome. By chance, these newcomers include some under 50s, Mr & Mrs M Lee, Mr E Connell & Miss C Black, Mr & Mrs L Vaughan, Mr T Brown, Mr & Mrs P Simmons, Mr & Mrs C Collings, Mr W Mills, Mr & Mrs T Manton.

SHEILA R. COPE, *Membership Secretary*

# 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

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*

# HEROIC RAID REMEMBERED

## A REPORT ON ST. GEORGE'S DAY 1999

*By David Atwood*

For the first time members of the Dover Society were officially invited to the St. George's Day services to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the Zeebrugge Raid, one of the most famous battles of the First World War. It was a daring raid to blockade a part of the German fleet which was using the Belgium canal system at Zeebrugge to operate against the Dover Patrol protecting the safe passage of troops and supplies crossing the Channel. The operation was planned and mounted here in Dover by Vice-Admiral Roger Keyes, Commander of the Dover Patrol, who was later knighted for his services. The raid cost the lives of over 200 sailors and marines and nearly 400 were wounded. The covered market (now the ground floor of Dover Museum) was used as a temporary mortuary. Eleven Victoria Crosses and over 600 decorations were awarded for this action.

On St. George's Day, this year, the arrangements were made by Dover District Council. The parade was attended by the Mayor of Deal and the Mayor of Dover supported by ten councillors and other officials, including Lord Keyes, Mark Watts MEP, and a group of officials from Belgium. For the services there were representatives from the army from Shorncliffe, from the Duke of York's Military School, the Sea Cadets and twelve ex-service associations. The Dover Society was represented by Leo Wright, Mike Weston, Derek Leach and myself. Jack Woolford, who was due to attend, was, unfortunately, ill on the day.

Those attending the parade assembled at the Brook House Car Park and coaches conveyed everyone to a wreath-laying ceremony at the far end of Waterloo Crescent at the HMS Vindictive's grappling iron memorial. This was followed by another short service at St. James's cemetery, where further wreaths were laid, including one by Derek Leach on behalf of

the Dover Society. This was the most moving part of the day, having an ideal setting on a hillside with a backdrop of trees, the standard bearers overlooking the Zeebrugge Monument and rows of graves on one side and bemedalled ex-servicemen on the other, together with the colourful cloaks of the dignitaries. Here was peace and tranquillity with only the sound of birds, a fitting place for an act of remembrance.

The final service took place at the Town Hall and, at noon from the balcony, Mayor Margaret Sansum sounded 'eight bells' on the Zeebrugge Bell. It was a pity that this last part of the parade was lacking in the dignity that we had experienced at St. James's cemetery. Although the traffic had been diverted away from Priory Road, it was still allowed in Ladywell. Members of the public continued to walk in front of and behind the assembled parade and other onlookers. A few moments before the bell was struck I had to request a workman repairing a shop front opposite to refrain from hammering. This, I found, rather destroyed the atmosphere of reverence.

All three services were conducted by the Rev. Graham Batten of St. Mary's and at each one a Royal Marine bugler sounded the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille'. The parade dispersed and members reconvened at the Bluebirds restaurant for a buffet lunch, where presentations were made to three children from St. Mary's Primary School who were winners in a competition, organised by the Town Council and the Dover Express, in which they wrote war correspondents' reports on the Zeebrugge raid. It was good to see that the younger generation was being encouraged to show an interest in the events of the past and it is hoped that this may become an annual event. Many of those taking part that day were travelling to Zeebrugge for further services at the weekend.

# HISTORY IN STONE

## A GUIDED TOUR OF DOVER CEMETERIES

REPORT BY TERRY SUTTON

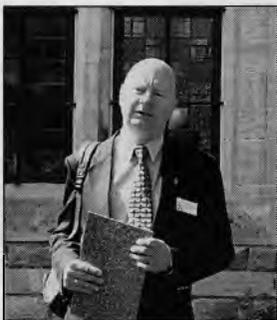
On June 5th members of the Dover Society went on a most interesting tour of Dover cemeteries. Our guide was Martyn Webster, an immigration officer living in Brighton, who is an old boy of Dover Grammar School and a member of the Society. He showed us how much local history is to be found, inscribed in stone, on gravestones and tombs.

In bright sunshine Martyn led the tour around the Copt Hill cemeteries, off Old Charlton Road, and ferreted out the history of many of the town's leading citizens of yesteryear, of foreigners who died on our shores, and heroes of many a conflict including three holders of the Victoria Cross.

The cemeteries toured were St. James', Charlton and St. Mary's but the group could not enter the little walled Jewish cemetery because it was the Sabbath.

Martyn wants to see the tour of cemeteries, and the study of the gravestones, become a permanent feature of Dover's tourism drive. So far his offers to the authorities have fallen on deaf ears.

Mr Webster explained why and how the decision was made to buy the acres at Copt Hill for Dover's burials as the town's population rapidly increased in 50 years in the 19th century from 7,000 to more than 20,000. It was one of three sites suggested and the Copt Hill decision was only made on the casting vote of the vicar of St. James'. "How much the citizens of Dover today, yesteryear and tomorrow owe to the



*Tour guide, Martyn Webster*

foresight of that gentleman," said Mr Webster.

Pointing out features of the Jewish cemetery Mr Webster said the walled Jewish cemetery was donated to the Jewish community by the Wardens of Dover Harbour Board but he admits he has been unable to find any evidence of this.

Mr Webster revealed many details of the interesting people who have been buried

in the Jewish cemetery, where the gates are kept locked. The first burial there was of Mrs Catherine Isaacs, sugar confectioner of York Street who died in 1868. The Jewish cemetery is still in use, although the last burial there was four years ago. The memorial tablets that line the walls were taken from the shell-damaged synagogue in Northampton Street which was later demolished.

One memorial is to six victims of the sinking of the Netherlands America steamship W.A.Scholten in 1887 which caused the largest burial of shipwreck victims in peacetime Dover until the loss of the Herald of Free Enterprise. The Scholten was, at the time, carrying many emigrant Jews en route from eastern Europe to America. The Dover Express at the time reported that the Jewish mourners went into the cemetery while the Gentiles "most of whom behaved" were outside and lined the walls.

In May 1870 the new St. Mary's cemetery was opened with the ten acres costing around £200 an acre. In this cemetery one of the more interesting



monuments, partly inscribed in Arabic, is in memory of 22 Lascar seamen who died in the sinking off Dover of the P&O liner *Maloja* while on passage from Gravesend to Bombay. She sank off Shakespeare Beach in February 1916 after being mined or torpedoed with the loss of 155 lives. Fifty eight bodies were brought ashore at Dover.

St. James' cemetery's six acres was purchased for £1,200 and opened for burials in January 1855. Mr Webster pointed out a huge granite monument to a South American who died in Dover and the graves of many soldiers, including the three holders of the VC, sailors and airmen. One stone remembered Lt. Colonel Douglas Hyde-Thomson, who had served in the Royal Navy, killed in a flying accident on duty in May 1918, aged 27. "To meet the Lord in the air, so shall we ever be with the Lord" is his gravestone inscription. And there, in a peaceful setting, rest the victims of the 1918 Zeebrugge Raid and not far away the beautifully kept Imperial War Graves cemetery of some of those brought home dead from the Evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940.

High up on the slopes, overlooking this tranquil hollow fashioned by nature, are buried some of Dover's 19th century leading citizens including Sir Richard Dickeson, mayor four times in the 1870s, and members of the influential Terson family. Ivy creeps over Sir Richard's grave, a man apparently forgotten, while the

Terson tomb is well maintained.

The last cemetery of the four to be consecrated was Charlton, ten acres opened in May 1872, bought from the Crown for £2,500. At the time it was known as the Claypits. Here we saw the memorial to the poet Charles Churchill transferred there from an old churchyard now crushed below the dual carriageway of York Street.

In this cemetery Mr Webster laid a rose on the graves of his own great grandfather Robert Webster who was born in 1821, became a yachtmaster and died in 1878. He laid another rose on the grave of his maternal grandparents.

Says Mr Webster: "These four cemeteries combine to make their whole amphitheatre-like site into a veritable necropolis. The scenic natural situation is both stunning and unique for a town the size of Dover. The whole history of Dover is reflected in two centuries of burials of soldiers, sailors and airmen, foreigners, transients, and the citizens of Dover themselves, Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus together". A guest on the tour was Kate Parker, representing the Monuments Awareness Board who is hoping that the four Dover cemeteries will be entered in a national award scheme with which she is involved.

The tour ended with a delicious strawberry tea at the home of our chairman, Jeremy Cope, and his wife, Sheila. There we were able to recover from the long walk around three cemeteries. Jeremy expressed our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Webster, who instilled in us all a great appreciation of these beautiful acres.



# PROJECTS *Update*

JOHN OWEN, Chairman, Projects Sub-Committee

## DOVER CADETS MAKE IT TEN IN A ROW WITH 'OPERATION LOOKING FINE 99'

As we hoped for a good turn-out in this the 10th annual cadet voluntary project for the environment the number of units taking part was disappointing, though the enthusiasm of those who did take part was again quite remarkable.

On Sunday 14 March, in warm sunny weather the cadets carried out a litter drive. Organised by The Dover Society on a team competition basis, it took place in the Castle Hill area with litter traps off the main road being targeted. The cadets can be well pleased with their efforts in eliminating the eyesores which were found in areas such as Godwyne Path, Castle Hill zigzag and Harold Passage.

Starting at Connaught Park layby each team had to work out the logistics of arriving at the finish with all their full bags intact, not an easy task. Some cadets became dedicated pack mules leaving the rest to do the skirmishing. Others took turns to carry the increasing load of bags.

Two hours later we saw the overheated volunteers arriving at the finish in The Dover Leisure Centre carpark where the judging took place. The Dover Sea Cadets from TS LYNX were awarded the silver trophy donated by The Dover Society and presented by Chairman Mr Jeremy Cope.

After a photocall the Dover Leisure Centre invited them to use their facilities

and provided complimentary refreshments to all participants, in recognition of a job well done.

The successful completion of this project represents the tenth successive annual Dover cadet units' effort, during which they have participated in cleaning the River Dour, beach cleans, litter drives, tree photographic survey, tree planting and town centre sticker removal.

Participating units have been CCF Dover Grammar School, 354 Squadron ATC, and TS LYNX Sea Cadets, all of which can be proud of their contribution throughout the decade. The town and district councils have been fully supportive of the young volunteers' efforts and local business sponsors have played their part including Macdonald's, Zoom Photos (Kodak), Dover Leisure Centre, Marks & Spencers, Tesco, CRS Co-p, White Cliffs Dover Hotel & Guest House Group, Emmaus, Cinque Port Arms and Dover District Council.

Organised by The Dover Society, young volunteers sponsors and Council support, have combined as an effective partnership in the interests of the local environment.



*'Operation Looking Fine 99' 14 March 1999.  
Chairman Jeremy Cope presents the Dover Society Trophy to the winning  
Sea Cadet team, T.S. LYNX*

# A Brief History of Local Times?

BY LESLEY GORDON

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With the Millennium fast approaching, the 25th anniversary of Dover District Council may seem small beer in comparison. Yet a quick look back over the past three decades highlights how much this part of East Kent has changed in a quarter of a century.

In the early 1970s, five local authorities, the Boroughs of Dover, Deal and Sandwich and the Rural District Councils of Dover and Eastry (which now make up Dover District Council), became reluctant bedfellows, forced together by the Local Government Act 1972. Scared of losing valuable resources to their neighbours, they began a spending exercise. Dover quickly added a new sports centre to its swimming pool and Sandwich built a fine extension to The Guildhall and discovered a way of retaining its toll bridge receipts for the small Town Council which would remain. The rural areas started a "small is beautiful campaign" but to no avail. Following a public inquiry over the northern part of the new District, Eastry RDC lost the five parishes of Sarre, St. Nicholas, Acol, Minster and Monkton to nearby Thanet. Sandwich successfully fought off similar attentions from Thanet, thanks to the Cinque Ports connection and the not disinterested support of Dover and Deal, eager to encompass the healthy rate revenues of Sandwich's industrial hinterland within the new District's coffers.

Many of the 55 (now 56) Councillors for the new District had served with the smaller constituent authorities and found it difficult to adapt. Representatives for the rural areas, in particular, were horrified at the way party politics ruled in the larger towns. The new Council was predominantly Conservative and the Deal members showed their political clout by taking six of the seven major committee chairmanships. Under a new national Labour government and in the gloom of the 3-day week, the new authority felt its way to the starting line of 1st April 1974, a date which passed without the general population appearing to notice

much difference.

With 27 different offices and depots scattered around the District for staff and workmen, and with technology harking back to a bygone age (Gestetner copiers and simple manual typewriters), the new authority took time to get its act together and had to prevail on Thanet District Council to let it share existing computer facilities at Ramsgate. The political skills of the new leading Conservative Councillors were not, perhaps, matched by their personnel skills and two Chief Executives soon passed acrimoniously into history, the first never even making it to the starting date of the new authority. Some preoccupations in the early years were the route of the A2 Dover Bypass and Jubilee Way, the future of Waldershare Park (on which John Aspinall had designs) and severe flooding at Deal. The first attempt to revive plans for the Channel Tunnel came and went, struck down in 1974 by a succession of general elections and, later in the decade, Hughie Batchelor began his assault on Sladden Wood at Alkham.

The District Council had to get used to managing new functions such as planning (previously the prerogative of the County Council) and to letting go gracefully of those which had been taken away, principally highways and libraries. On highways, a compromise was reached with the County Council, with a complicated agency agreement transferring certain functions in Dover and Deal back to the District. New efforts at co-operation and powersharing between different local authorities and with private sector bodies was ultimately to become a major feature of local government life, less acrimonious and more spontaneous and fruitful as the years went by.

Throughout the 1980s (and to this day) as local government was subject to increasing belt-tightening by the successive governments of Margaret Thatcher;

18 rationalisation and competition became the order of the day. Successive local elections brought in new Councillors, unhampered by memories of former authorities, who strove to streamline and modernise the Council, concentrating more on its services to the public in general than to their own particular patch. In 1980 the first word processors struck terror into the hearts of departmental secretaries and typists. In 1983 the whole staffing structure of the Council was rejigged to reduce the number of departments to six. The privatisation of major services such as refuse collection, street cleaning and highway maintenance reinforced the links with the private sector. Sales of council houses soared. Between 1982 and 1987 Council staff were gradually gathered into new offices at the White Cliffs Business Park at Whitfield. Efficient, responsive services (backed up by a comprehensive complaints procedure), were at a premium and tested to the full with the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster in March 1987, the hurricane in October of that year and the Deal Barracks bombing in 1989. The Herald Fund, set up by the Council with its Chief Executive as Chairman of the Trustees, was formed, met and authorised first payments within six days of the disaster.

The 1980s also saw the building of the White Cliffs Experience and the new museum at Dover, major refurbishment of pedestrian areas in the centres of Deal and Dover, Tides Leisure Pool and the tennis bubble at Deal and the public inquiry into the new route for the A20 from Court Wood to Dover Docks. The Poll Tax, subject of bitter dissent, came and went. A more successful Channel Tunnel scheme now came to fruition and, nearer home, the Council finally assumed responsibility for its own computer services with a new IBM facility at Whitfield. The SDLP made a brief appearance, to be replaced in early 1991 by the Lib Dems, then the Liberals, who came and stayed but failed to conquer, although they did so in adjoining authorities.

And what of the 1990s? They saw the planning and opening of the Eastry/Whitfield Bypass, a revamped Crabble

Football Ground and Dover seafront, other multi-agency initiatives at Elvington and in the former coalfield areas and improvements to major car parks and the general environment. Increasingly these joint initiatives owe their existence to the promise of central government or EC cash. New industrial estates have sprung up at Whitfield and, as the wheel comes full circle, the Council is poised to assume responsibility from KCC for all local highways.

The last nine years have seen major changes politically, with the original large Conservative majority dwindling in successive local elections to give, eventually, a hung Council and then a Labour majority rivalling the original Tory one and now yet another hung council. Local government finance was, and still is, screwed down by Central Government, reinforcing the quest for value for money and better services at lower cost. Technology has spread into every corner of the Council's operations. Staff and workmen, who numbered nearly 1200 in the mid 1970s are down to around 500, despite the addition of new services such as economic development and information technology. Many staff have transferred to the private sector. In the mid 1990s the Conservative Government's Land Commission toured the country, as history repeated itself another reorganisation akin to that of 1974, beckoned, with the promised return of old style County Boroughs, responsible for all local government services, a concept extended to mixed urban and rural areas and not just to major cities. But East Kent escaped unchanged, although Dover, Deal and Great Mongeham acquired new town or parish councils. Escaped this time, that is, for the Commission will return.

New reforms still beckon - locally elected mayors and less restraint on spending in return for meeting nationally approved targets. As the District looks forward to its next quarter century the only certain prospect is change and more change. So a small birthday celebration is, surely, in order, for who knows what form local government may take in 2024?

# Review of the Dover Festival 1999 19

• • • • • Donna Sowerby • • • • •  
ARTS & EVENTS MANAGER, DDC

**T**he Dover Festival celebrated its 8th birthday this May with another action packed programme of events and the same old wet weather forecast!

Each year the Festival programme adapts to meet community needs and expectations - as far as the budget allows! It was through our consultation last year that young people of the district requested more opportunities to 'have a go' at popular art forms or to further develop their artistic skills.

Not wishing to discourage their enthusiasm for the arts the team looked at past Festival events and the more recent introduction of various holiday arts workshops. Finally, the programme for 1999 was created - a new look, yet again, for the Dover Festival.

The celebrations opened with the ever popular family fun weekend of professional European street theatre, the famous Teddy Bear's Picnic and a day of traditional seaside entertainment on the Bank Holiday Monday. Five days of young people's workshops, training and performance followed, with collaborative dance projects led by well known choreographers, music professionals and the second part of the combined arts trilogy - 'The Dreaming Sea' - with Strange Cargo Arts Company.

Adults were encouraged to take part in the Channel Theatre's "Open Stages '99" programme, a series of theatre related events and workshops designed to stimulate interest in writing, performing and directing for stage. Unfortunately attendances were a little low, so maybe we should choose a different art form in the years ahead?

Music, dance and song combined with good food and drink at the Coward and Gershwin Centenary Cabarets staged at the Churchill Hotel, performing to a full house over two nights. Dover Town Council's 60's Night was a great success, and the Evacuees'

Reunion sold out in little over two hours!

The package was topped with a good range of walks and cycle rides, exhibitions and competitions - thanks to the continuing support of local organisations, attractions and businesses.

After eight years of Festival events with, no doubt, almost a thousand activities how can you select a favourite? I have to say that



*Fun at the evacuees reunion - De Bradelei Wharf Shopping Centre*

the performance of 'The Dreaming Sea' at Dover Castle was by far the highlight of this programme for me. As a member of the audience it is so difficult to imagine the challenges set by any project to achieve the quality experienced on the opening night. The artistes and technicians of Strange Cargo Arts Company had been working around the clock in the weeks leading to the production to ensure the young people, amateur and professional artists taking part were well rehearsed.

With a number of changes and adjustments made to the programme, we were close to tears when on dress rehearsal night the weather was grim with winds of gale force 9 and temperatures dipped to 10c - would the show have to be cancelled?



*The Jelly Rollers in action at 'Beside the Seaside' festivities*

Thursday evening finally arrived. The sky was crystal clear, the winds had dropped and the temperature rose (a little!). The performance from everyone involved was magical: from the impressive sculptures and haunting musical score, to the choreography, special effects and creativity of such a contemporary piece of work which the cast and crew had worked so hard to achieve.

I hope some of you had the chance to see the production, and if so, I do hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. For me, it is so rewarding to see young people, some with little or no arts experiences, become a valued part of a production, working alongside professionals to achieve the final result.

Next year the Dover Festival will change again to enable the Arts & Events team to stage something a little different for the Millennium year. So keep an eye on the local press for exciting news of the 'Vision 2000 - A New Millennium' programme of celebrations.

## OPEN DAY

**Sunday 12 September**

*The surviving dissenters meeting house in Dover.*

*Learn something of its intriguing history,  
see the simple beauty of its interior*

## UNITARIAN CHURCH DOVER

Grade II Listed Building

**12 - 4pm**

*Gallery • Box Pews • Holdich Pipe Organ  
Art Work • Music • Old Documents  
Baptism/Burial Records*

**REFRESHMENTS - ADMISSION FREE**

**SNARGATE/YORK STREET ROUNDABOUT**

**Enquiries: 01303 276916**

## DOVER PAGEANT 29 & 30 August 1999



To celebrate the end of the millennium in style by telling the story of Dover through narration, music, dance and colourful costumes in the beautiful 12th century grounds of Dover College.

We need more help from members for our next project which is participation in the Dover pageant to be held in the grounds of Dover College in a few weeks' time.

The Pageant itself will run for two hours from 2.30pm and, on both days, the Society tent will be in action from 1.45pm until the completion of the Pageant.

In addition to the volunteers with a sense of fun who will be dressing in Napoleonic period costumes (provided) for the Wellington slot, we also need:

- stewards in the hospitality tent
- contributions of home-made refreshments to offer for sale to members and friends who visit the tent during the Pageant
- donations of prizes for our tombola stall.

As this is a two day event this year we need lots of helpers. Offers of help, please, to John or Ann Owen on 01304 202207 or to any committee member.

# MEDWAY TRIP

onboard Paddle steamer 'Kingswear Castle'

BY CAPT MIKE WESTON

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May dawned bright and fresh with a strong southwesterly wind – just the weather needed for a successful barge race. Twenty-five Dover Society members boarded the coach and within a short time we arrived at Strood Pier just below the bridges at Rochester. There, waiting to take us and another 140 or so passengers down the river to view the annual barge match (this being the 91<sup>st</sup>), was the paddle steamer "Kingswear Castle". This small coal fired vessel, in immaculate condition, was built in 1924 for service on the river Dart in Devon. For nigh on forty years she sailed the Dart before she was withdrawn from service in 1965. Her fate was undetermined at the time, but she was eventually rescued by The Paddle Steamer Preservation Society which, with the help of a number of sources, was able to restore her, and return her to service with full certification in 1985.

With passengers aboard we set sail down the Medway in search of the participants in the barge sailing match. This is what we had come to see. This annual sailing match brings together barges of various classes that had at one time or another been used for commercial trading up and down the coast. Now of course with the demise of sailing barges for commercial use, all the barges are privately owned. They have been carefully and lovingly restored and are sailed for pleasure. The facts given to us over the public address system illustrated only too vividly the decline over relatively few years of the barge numbers. Out of approximately 3000 barges built there are now under thirty in existence. The heyday of barge operations was in 1907 when 2070 sailing barges were working. By 1918 this had fallen to 1650. 1930 saw 1100 barges still trading. At the outbreak of World War II



*Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle at Neptune Jetty, Sheerness*

22 there were 600 barges but by the end of the war this figure had been reduced to 300 and further reduced to 80 by 1950. The last commercial barge ("Cambria") ceased trading in 1970.

The sailing barge match has its start and finish off Gillingham Pier. The course takes the barges down the Medway, out into the Thames Estuary around the Medway Buoy and back into the Medway up to Gillingham Pier. On this particular day with an ebbing tide and a wind behind them the barges had made very good passage times down the river. Therefore they were well ahead of us but we were informed that the plan was to go down the river and out into the estuary where we would then find the sailing fleet, so we settled down to an interesting trip down the river.

Within a very short time of leaving Strood we were passing the old Naval Dockyard at Chatham with its fine buildings of an earlier era. The hulk of the 1878 Victorian sloop "Gannet" was moored off the dockyard. The plan is to restore this vessel and she will join other vessels on display to visitors to The Chatham Historic Dockyard (or as it has just been renamed the World Naval Base). Just visible in the dry-docks, of which there are three, could be seen the submarine "Ocelot" which was the last vessel to be built for the Royal Navy at Chatham, and the last of the World War II destroyers "Cavalier". "Cavalier" had arrived earlier in the week under tow from the Tyne from where she had been rescued from falling into dereliction or from going overseas. The plan is to preserve her at Chatham where she will be dedicated to the memory of the many thousands of fighting seamen who perished in numerous destroyers sunk during World War II. She is berthed on the site where Lord Nelson's flagship, HMS "Victory" was built and launched in 1765.

Below Chatham Upnor Castle could clearly be seen. This is a 16<sup>th</sup>. century fortification built to protect the dockyard., although the Dutch were still able to breach



*Paddle Steamer Kingswear Castle*

this defence. Below Upnor another fortification was in evidence - the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Hoo Fort. Hoo Fort is one of a series of forts built to protect the approaches to the naval dockyards. Collectively they were known as "Palmerston's follies"

Kingsnorth Power Station and then Thamesport (the container port built on the site of the Isle of Grain oil terminal) were passed in quick succession. Adjacent to Thamesport could be seen the site upon which the Channel Tunnel concrete castings were made. Passing Sheerness the buoys marking the wreck of the World War I battleship HMS "Bulwark" could be seen. This 15,000-ton battleship had returned from a patrol and was moored in the river loading stores and munitions when she blew up on November 29<sup>th</sup> 1914 killing virtually all onboard. Less than a dozen souls survived. It appeared from an Admiralty Court finding that 'accidental ignition of ammunition' was the cause of this disaster.



Garrison Point, on the Isle of Sheppey, the entrance to the Medway, was passed. In the distance ahead of us could be seen what we had come down the river to find - the marvellous sight of sailing badges under full sail in a strong breeze. By this time they were at the seaward end of their course and rounding the Medway buoy in preparation for the return leg of the race back to the finishing line off Gillingham. With much dexterity by our captain, "Kingswear Castle" was manoeuvred into positions amongst the sailing fleet so that photographs of these magnificent vessels could be taken from close quarters. At the same time a watchful eye had to be kept to make certain that we stayed well clear of the buoys surrounding the wreck of the World War II liberty ship "Richard Montgomery". This vessel is a well-known notorious wreck because of the cargo it was carrying when it became wrecked. The "Richard Montgomery"

was one of approximately 2700 Liberty ships built during the war on a conveyor belt system by shipyards in America to overcome the severe losses of merchant ships sunk by enemy action. She had sailed across the Atlantic, around the north of Scotland and down to the Thames where she anchored. Unfortunately she anchored too close to sandbanks, went aground and became a wreck. She was carrying a large quantity of munitions, hence her notoriety. Her masts are still very much in evidence for all to see.



Joan Liggett and John and Ann Owen watch the finishing stages of the races

The return leg of the sailing match was a real test of skill for the skippers of the barges and their crews. The wind by this time blowing about a force six was mainly from ahead as the craft made their way in from sea and up the river. This meant tacking all the way with the many alterations of course, sail settings and barge boards which tacking entails. A demanding

24 operation, the difficulties of which were compounded by the fact that low water had only just been passed and therefore the necessity to keep within the confines of the buoyed channel was paramount if the fate of running aground was to be averted. One unfortunate competitor well up with the leaders was observed to do just that and sat ignominiously on the mud whilst other competitors passed.

Watching from our vantagepoint on "Kingswear Castle" it was fascinating to observe at close quarters the jostling that went on between the antagonists. One could not help but think of the skills that were required of crews in the past (only two or three

men on a barge) who sailed these barges, heavily laden with cargo, up and down the coast, in and out of creeks and rivers in all weathers, in the course of their commercial operations. The barges we were observing were crewed by many more than two or three people and were not laden with cargo.

Our run back up the river again was skilfully managed so that we passed through the fleet of barges with many opportunities for photographs and observing the barges at close quarters. We arrived off the finishing point ahead of the fleet and moored up to a buoy just above

the finishing line so that we were able to observe the first and subsequent barges cross the finishing line. The honour of being first went to the bowsprit class barge, "Repertor" with another bowsprit class barge, "Xylonite", following close on her heels. Over the next hour we were able to observe the remaining competitors crossing the line.

Leaving behind Gillingham and the barges "Kingswear Castle" made her way back up to Strood Pier where we disembarked for our coach journey back to Dover.

I am sure I speak for all when I say the day was enthralling. The barge crews had the bonus of very good sailing winds, but

this proved less of a bonus for the observers. Red faces seemed to be the order of the day as we trooped off "Kingswear Castle". Of course it may not have been the wind and sun which produced this phenomenon it could well have been put down to the beer!

Our thanks must go to Joan Liggett for organising a very successful day.



'Repertor' at the finishing post showing '1st across the line' pennant



Course: from abreast Gillingham Pier to Medway Buoy and return - 29 miles

# MRS BERESFORD BAKER AND THE DAY STAR MISSION

*Derek Leach*

Little did I realise when I decided to research the history of a building in Dover where it would lead me. My starting point was an old photograph of an elderly woman. On the back was written Mrs Baker, Founder of the Day Star Mission. These few words were to reveal a fascinating story. Isabella Wilson from Knowle in Warwickshire married William Beresford Baker, an Army captain from Ireland, in 1877. This was accompanied by a marriage settlement. A Trust was formed. The Rev Cosmo Noyes and John Saint were appointed as Trustees and certain funds were vested in the Trustees who were empowered to purchase and sell hereditaments as they thought fit. I assume that the money came from Isabella's family and was intended to provide a home for her and her husband. By 1890, if not before, they were living at 2 Wellesley Terrace - in one of the four houses that were later converted into the Grand Hotel. The 1891 census shows that they had six servants living in. By 1900 they had moved to 9 Waterloo Crescent.

In 1907 the Bakers bought, via their Trust, 11 Princes Street, the adjoining cottages on Durham Hill and the (new) large hall at the rear from Thomas Lewis, a builder. These premises had comprised Prospect House School until at least 1905. The adjoining premises 12 Princes Street (Matlock House) plus the adjacent cottage 1A Cowgate Hill were purchased at the same time from Henry Hutchinson, the school master who had run Prospect House School (a private school for young gentlemen) since 1866.

The 1908 Dover Directory lists Mrs Beresford Baker with a Home of Rest at 11 and 12 Princes Street. and her husband

Captain Beresford Baker living separately at 25 Waterloo Crescent - more about that later! The Day Star Mission Hall on Durham Hill appears for the first time in the 1908 Directory.

The Directory entries are unchanged until 1921: Mrs Beresford Baker still at number 11, Christians Home Mission but with Captain William Beresford Baker at number 12, Prospect House. This situation was unchanged until 1934 when Mrs Baker is shown both at the Christians Home Mission and at Prospect House. Her husband had died in 1933..

These are the cold documentary facts but they reveal nothing of the fascinating story that I have discovered from talking to a handful of people who remember Mrs Baker.

Mrs Scott, who was born in 1922 in Bowling Green Terrace and has lived in the locality all her life, told me that the Day Star Mission Hall was run by 'Lady Baker' as she was known locally. She was a very well to do regal lady with a superb soft-topped car and chauffeur. Mrs Scott recalls as a young child in the 20's and 30's everybody in the surrounding (poor) streets would look when Lady Baker ventured out. Mrs Baker was very good to the local people - every Monday she sent out food parcels to different poor people in the locality. Mrs Scott attended the Day Star Mission Sunday School from the age of four attending a service in the hall of all age groups which then separated into different classes. At Christmas there would be a big service and Mrs Baker would sit at a large table covered in brown parcels - the table not Mrs Baker- with a gift for every child (which was always a garment). The lady missionaries who lived at Mrs Baker's

26 Home of Rest made a lot of the gifts. At Christmas 1930, when Mrs Scott was about 8, she was not given a gift because she had been naughty but was told that she would have it the next week if she behaved - which she did - but the gift was a pair of big bloomers which fitted her mother who was 8 months pregnant! The Mission had a Mothers' Meeting on Monday afternoons with a crèche for children but Mrs Scott only went once - her mother was asked to leave her with a neighbour in future! Services for grown ups were held Sunday mornings and evenings.

I managed to track down a lady who had given the YMCA - the present owners of the building, a photograph of Mrs Isabella Baker. The photograph had been given to her by an old friend of 92 who had been her Sunday School teacher at the Mission and who was still alive. I arranged to see her and spent an interesting morning listening to her story. This was Mrs Florence Morris (nee Steel) who knew Mrs Baker very well. Her own life story is fascinating with much of it connected with Mrs Beresford Baker and the Day Star Mission. She was born in London but came to live in Dover when she was two. As a small child her mother found out that Mrs Baker's Day Star Mission (as it was known) distributed parcels and gifts to those attending. So Florrie soon attended the Sunday School which was 250 strong and went with her mother to the Monday Mothers' Meeting and the Sunday evening service. Later, Florrie was to be a Sunday School teacher at the Mission for many years. Every Christmas each child would receive two garments made by Mrs Baker's ladies and two oranges handed out by Mrs Baker.

At the age of fourteen Florrie went into service with a Miss Alice Payne, a cripple who lived in Beaconsfield Road and ran a cottage industry with a few girls employed on knitting machines. Florrie did

everything for Miss Payne - washing and dressing her, cooking etc. Prayers were always said morning and evening. She also pushed Miss Payne in her wheelchair to the Day Star Mission meetings. As a result Florrie became the 'prodigy' of Mrs Baker with Mrs Baker clothing her, taking her out and taking her for a holiday to her country house at Tenterden.

At nineteen Florrie became nanny to the children of Mr and Mrs Cook at Davington Manor, Faversham. Mr Cook was a director of Shepherd Neame. After two years Mrs Baker wrote and asked if she would like to go to Africa as nanny to the children of a doctor and his wife who were going as missionaries. Florrie jumped at the chance and returned to Dover; but, the good doctor would not take her insisting that she would be homesick!

Mrs Morris told me that Mrs Baker was a very wealthy woman (presumably the wealth was inherited) who had been presented at court when she was young. Mrs Baker always wore black with white satin fronts. Her clothes and hats were



*Mrs Beresford Baker*

made on the premises. The hats had to allow for her bun to show through. She bought her husband out of the army but 'they never lived together'. He drank a lot and always used a back door to avoid being seen returning from his drinking trips. He lived in one part of the building with his own servants and she in another (Nodd Ffa - House of Repair). She had ten well-to-do



*Inside the mission hall*

retired ladies living with her known as her ladies-in-waiting. Some of them had been missionaries. They made a lot of clothes for the children of the Sunday School etc and assisted in the Mission's work. Apparently Mrs Baker also paid for some missionaries abroad.

Mrs Baker had eight maids in uniform - some at least were local girls that had been rescued. Florrie tells the story of going out one day visiting the poor with one of the ladies. At one house they found a fat woman in rags lying on the floor in a completely empty room. They returned to the Mission for food and drink, but Mrs Baker told them to bring the woman back to the Mission. She was given a maid's room, was washed and clothed and became another maid. The maids had to be up at 4am every morning roused by a retired school governess..

Mrs Baker held 'Quiet Evenings' for her ladies on Tuesday. Florrie was invited to attend but the ladies would not start their discussion saying 'We are not alone Mother, because Florrie's here'. Mrs Baker replied 'Florrie is one of us - do I note a spot of jealousy?' Everybody loved her and she loved them. She was known as our Dover Mother.

Another 90 years old contact, Eric

James, told me that she was also known as our Holy Mother. He confirmed that she was well loved and never heard a nasty word said about her. Even so she was strict with her ladies and maids who were never let out of the building without her permission. Tradesmen were often asked to post their letters.

Eric James had a coal merchant's business in Queen Street founded by his father in 1889. He told me that Mrs Baker was a good customer of theirs - particularly at Christmas when she would arrange for the most needy people who attended her Mission to have 3cwt of coal as well as groceries. He recalls Mrs Baker buying a Ford open tourer car in 1928 but there were few drivers around then. She asked Eric's father for a driver temporarily who would also teach somebody else to drive permanently for her. Eric, who was twenty years old, got the job. He drove Mrs Baker and two of her ladies to (the old) Sainsbury's at Folkestone to shop. She and two of her ladies would also be driven into the country for picnics - Woolage Green and Nonington, he remembers. Each person, including Eric, was given a packed lunch of good food. She was a stickler for time and punctuality and always told her staff what time she would be back. On one

28 occasion she asked to be driven to Dymchurch but only left three quarters of an hour to be driven back before her scheduled return to Dover. They were ten minutes late and all the staff were waiting outside and gave her a great welcome as if she had been lost!

Eric taught a Mr Hogben to drive the car. He was the husband of one of the maids. On another occasion, when Mr Hogben was able to drive but Eric had to sit alongside to keep an eye on him, an outing to Tenterden was arranged. Mrs Baker hired three single decker open top coaches for the people of the Mission and some of her ladies but she went in the car with two of her ladies and the two drivers. The main party was left to enjoy themselves in a large field near Tenterden but Mrs Baker and her party went off to a big house. The two drivers and a Sister Hilda stayed outside and ate their packed lunches. After lunch Mrs Baker asked to be driven to Heathfield and they all went into a big house. Mrs Baker insisted that they all have a nap before returning, put Eric on a settee, covered him with a blanket and went off herself for her nap which lasted two hours! Then they went back to the big house at Tenterden. Apparently the owner was a missionary - or was it Mrs Baker's Tenterden house? He proceeded to give a talk about his exploits overseas. Then Eric drove them all home. That was the last time he went out with Mrs Baker because his trainee Mr Hogben was considered competent by then - no test in those days. Later Mrs Baker had a row with Mrs Hogben and sacked both her and her husband!

Eric James confirmed that Captain Baker and Mrs Beresford did not live together. Captain Baker had rooms in Prospect House adjoining Cowgate Hill and Mrs Baker occupied Nodd Ffa in the middle and Beresford House at the Durham Hill end. Inside you could move between them all. There was no friction between Mrs Baker and her husband. He was looked after by Mrs Beresford's staff

and she saw him occasionally but he was free to do as he pleased. They each had their own interests: Mrs Baker with her Mission work and Captain Baker the Royal Hippodrome in Snargate Street where he was a regular and always had a front row seat - apparently attracted to the chorus girls! He died in 1933.

Mrs Baker died aged 84 on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1938. She was buried in Charlton Cemetery and there I found a distinctive red granite headstone topped by a 12 pointed star - the Day Star. The headstone is inscribed :

TO THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND IN LOVING AND GRATEFUL  
MEMORY OF

ISABELLA BAKER

FOUNDER OF THE DAY STAR MISSION  
WHO ENTERED THE ETERNAL GLORY  
23RD OCTOBER 1938

REDEEMED WITH THE PRECIOUS  
BLOOD OF CHRIST

THY WORD WAS UNTO ME THE  
JOY AND REJOICING OF MINE HEART  
CAN YOU WONDER WHY IT IS

I LOVE HIM SO ?

Mrs Morris told me that when Mrs Baker was old she was infatuated with more than one younger man. She used to send her chauffeur for a man who was brought back for breakfast. She tired of him who was then replaced 'by a con man called Captain Geary' (*Mrs Morris's words not mine*). He became a trustee for the properties in 1923 and was one of her executors. According to Mrs Morris, Mrs Baker left virtually everything to Captain Geary on condition that he allowed her ladies to continue living in the house for the rest of their lives. She also left each lady £500 and something for Florrie. However, Captain Geary made life so unbearable for them that they all left and he sold everything. 'He was a rotter!' - according to Mrs Morris.

Captain Geary and his wife then opened the premises as the Day Star Mission Guest House. A small brochure described it as 'a Christian Holiday Home and Guest House, comfortably furnished,

gas fires in the bedrooms and bathrooms on each floor with hot and cold water. About 5 minutes walk from the sea and within easy access of station and of buses which run to the beautiful country and places of interest around Dover. Terms from 35/- per week according to room and season. Reductions made for permanent guests. Every care is taken to ensure comfort of guests. Family prayers daily. Services on Sunday and meetings during the week are held in the adjoining Mission Hall'.

Despite Mrs Morris's assertions about Captain Geary it appears that the Mission Hall activities continued for a while after Mrs Baker's death. Eric James told me that Captain Geary was between 40 and 50 when he took over but he did not last a year because he did not have enough money to run the place. Attendances at the Mission dropped off - perhaps because all the perks for the needy stopped.

To date I know little about the War years. Both Eric James and another contact say that the premises were taken over by the WRNS. In 1946 Stanley Geary and Leslie Philips (another of the Bakers' Trustees from 1923 and presumably a

beneficiary in her will) sold the premises to The British Sailors' Society.

So ended the era of Mrs Baker and the Day Star Mission but the premises have more to tell with the opening in 1949 of the Seamen's Residential Club followed in 1953 by the Prince of Wales Sea Training School. After its closure in 1975 Dover College used the premises as a school boarding house for girls until 1994. In 1996 the YMCA purchased the buildings and began renovation work to prepare Prospect House - or Prince of Wales House as it is now called- for the next phase of its fascinating life.

*Footnote Why Day Star? The dictionary tells us that the day star is the morning star - the bringer of light. The Christian connection is of course Jesus being called the light of the world. Charles Wesley in his hymn 'Christ whose glory fills the skies' ends the first verse 'Day star in my heart appear'. In 2 Peter 1 verse 19 the writer says 'So we are even more confident of the message proclaimed by the prophets. You will do well to pay attention to it, because it is like a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the light of the morning star shines in your hearts.'*

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*Prince of Wales House as it is today*

# Dover's Two Great 12th Century Men

Ivan Green BA. FCGED

When King Henry the 2nd, the first of the Plantagenet dynasty, came to the throne in 1154, the country was in a dreadful condition; internally in the grip of rival barons, each with his own motte and bailey castle, many of them openly pillaging the surrounding countryside, and with the crown in dispute; and externally open to attack from foreign raiders against whom there was little defence. King Henry II was a hard, restless, workaholic, determined to carry out the necessary changes to make the country governable again.

His first concern was to stabilise the internal situation and he ordered the destruction of all the illicit castles, (those built without royal permission). This edict affected the castles of many barons, a Kent example being Allington, near Maidstone.

In looking at the risk of invasion he was particularly concerned about three areas: the land behind the flat beaches of Suffolk; the north-eastern coast where there was the constant threat posed by North European tribes since no doubt he was aware that there, an invasion in 1066 by Tostig and Harald Hardrada, coupled with that of William in the south, resulted in William's defeat of Harold and the occupation of the country by the Normans; and William's primary invasion point at Dover, even though he did not succeed in landing there, for his overladen ships propelled only by small square sails were being forced further westwards than he intended.

Dover was a particular worry to him, since not only was an enormously strong defence needed at this very vulnerable point, but also he distrusted the old system of Castle Guard Tenure established there by William I. This consisted of the granting of considerable areas of the country to eight barons, who were Arsic,

Averanches, Grevecouer, Fitzwilliam, Fulbert, Mamignot, Peveral and Port. They had each to provide their own knights and their retainers to supplement the permanent castle guard for a given period of the year. The total was 171 1/2 knights fees. Henry, however, had cause to distrust the system of putting this vital defence into the hands of barons whose loyalty he did not trust. After all, only a few years previously the castle had been surrendered without a fight to Matilda when she arrived in the harbour from the continent. He therefore introduced the system of Scutage, in which the barons surrendered their castle guard duty in exchange for fines payable to the king who, with the money, was able to hire his own mercenary troops to guard the castle.

Henry then embarked upon a campaign of building permanent stone castles. An early one was Orford to guard against any invasion forces landing on the inviting flat Suffolk beaches, but his primary concern was to defend two specially vulnerable areas of the country, the north east coast, and Dover in the south.

His castles were not to be of the old earthen motte and bailey type which had proved to be a failure at Dover only a few years earlier, but of stone like the great keep of Rochester, built earlier in the century, and to achieve this he engaged the services of his own 'king's master mason', Maurice the Engineer, whose great castle still dominates Dover today, more than eight centuries later.

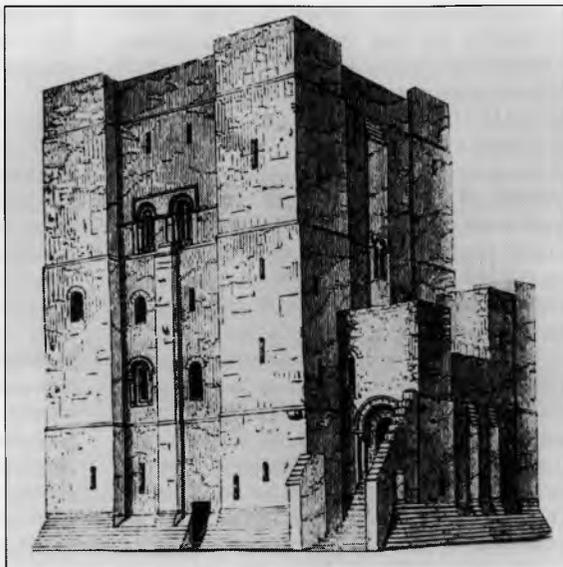
Today, and indeed for most of Queen Victoria's reign, any important work was always preceded and at least nominally supervised by a committee of socially acceptable and well known figures, even if they had little or no real experience of the proposed project.

But Maurice's was not just the royal appointment of a knightly supporter to provide overall supervision of the work, for like all mediaeval masons he was a highly skilled craftsman having spent many years of his life at learning all aspects of working with stone, first as a boy, shaping blocks of material for more skilled men, and then gradually progressing through many years of training to the point where he knew the whole craft and also had experience in the design and the organisation of the erection of great stone buildings.

He would have spent perhaps a quarter of a century of steady progress at more modest stages of his craft before he could have been appointed to his final position, the first ever recorded king's master mason. He possessed an annual stipend and was given presents from time to time. Considering his responsibilities he must have been wholly in the king's service.

He built Newcastle, the very name of the town referring to his building there, the new castle. Although much smaller, and costing some £900, only a fraction of the money spent on his later work at Dover, it bears a striking resemblance to Dover's great keep.

The illustration shows an old Victorian picture of Newcastle's keep. Even the entrance to the storage space at its base (bottom centre front) and the basic layout of the complicated entrance, which is also to be seen in ruin at Rochester, is familiar, though Dover's is more elaborate, its entrance being through the base of the tower which also includes the two chapels.



*Fig. 1. This illustration is an old Victorian picture of Newcastle's keep. Its similarity to the great keep of Dover is unmistakable*



*Fig. 2. The entrance to Maurice the Engineer's great keep at Dover Castle*

32 Immediately after completing Newcastle he was transferred to Dover, where expensive defensive works had already been carried out between 1168 and 1174 AD. Here, with the king's support, he commenced the greatest defensive project of the time, the building of the great stone fortress of Dover to replace the old Iron Age camp on the Eastern Heights and the Saxon motte and bailey defences which succeeded it and had been commanded, under early Norman rule, by Fulbert de Dover.

While he worked at Dover, Maurice also oversaw work on a smaller keep at Chilham between 1181-2. This still survives and is shown in Fig. 3. Its similarity with Orford suggests that he may have been responsible for both. Being an important royal servant of the King, he would always have travelled with a bodyguard and have been treated as an important individual wherever he went. A mediaeval king's master mason is depicted in a sketch by Matthew Paris in the British Museum where the mason is shown conversing with the king and carrying two badges of his profession, a

set square and a very large pair of dividers. The master mason used these on his mason's floor, an area of fine compacted earth on which no workman stepped except with bare feet.

Upon this surface the master mason, who was always expert in geometry, drew the plans of the windows, door frames and other delicate detail full size. His masons would then carve the stones to fit the plans exactly. When the particular piece was finished every stone was marked so that they could all be assembled on the building in their correct positions. Sometimes errors were made and the stones were assembled wrongly. This in fact happened in the rose window in Barfreton church, where one stone, wrongly placed, can still be seen eight centuries later.

Maurice seems to have been working at Dover in 1170-71 since he was granted 40 shillings as a gift for his work and, later, when he was working at Chilham, it is recorded that he was granted a gift of one mark. His masons were, of necessity, free men, not bound to their native soil, as were most of the population, but moving

from job to job, walking many miles sometimes right across Europe to new projects when their current ones were completed. Many masons were needed at Dover and they would have caused accommodation problems in the town because they always lived as a family group, with the master mason as their head, in the mason's lodge, a temporary structure beside the mason's floor and the work in which they were



Fig. 3. The Surviving keep of Chilham Castle, with which Maurice was also involved.

engaged. They were, of course, of varying degrees of skill, some carving the stone with an axe and the more skilled with a mason's chisel.

The materials at Maurice's disposal were very hard, durable but difficult-to-work Kentish Ragstone, which he used in large quantities, some from Gravesend but most from the great quarries at Boughton Monchelsea just south of Maidstone and smaller quantities from the Folkestone Beds, together with the softer and more-easily-worked stone from the King's own quarry at Caen for intricate carving and detail finishing work, such as in the two chapels.

The enormous amount of work involved in transporting the many thousands of tons of stone by a community with little equipment for handling large blocks except by manual effort can only be imagined. Most of the huge blocks of stone were hewn in quarries near Boughton Monchelsea and dragged on sledges down to a quay on the Medway riverside at Maidstone, loaded on to ships and brought around by sea to the little original harbour near old St. James's Church at Dover, where they were unloaded and hauled up the steep hill to the castle site on sledges drawn by oxen, the common beast of burden in those days. There were no wheeled vehicles available for such loads and, in any case, there were no good roads, only rough and often muddy tracks. The Ragstone from the Folkestone Beds was brought in the

same way, as was the Caen stone from Normandy.

The ships available were similar to those used for fishing and for Cinque Ports duties, but were larger, propelled by up to fifty oars and with larger square sails, still on a single central mast. But it is unlikely that oars would have been used for transporting stone, since their abandonment would have given more room for the heavy and cumbersome stone blocks.

This enormous undertaking was additional to the normal life of Dover's citizens. The working of the passage connecting England with the continent across the Channel still went on, as did fishing, some commerce with continental ports and further afield, the chasing away of piratical bands from overseas, especially from the northern countries, and less official occupations such as piracy, wrecking and occasional raids on foreign coastal towns.

The king frequently called upon the services of the Cinque Ports ships to transport him, his court and his soldiers across the straits. One such journey was to Freteval in 1170 when he made peace with Thomas Becket, his exiled archbishop. There is an interesting account of the archbishop's return home. On sailing up the channel to berth at Sandwich, one of his entourage pointed out Dover's white cliffs and called out 'This is England', a very early reference to 'White Cliffs Country'.



## Society Badges

The wearing of a Society Badge reminds the general public (who really do have eyes to see) that the Society is a viable and energetic non-political voice for Dover. The beautiful little enamelled Lapel or Brooch Badges are to Philomena Kennedy's original design, in black on a white ground, surrounded by a gold line defining the shape of the badge and are available from the Treasurer, in either type, for £2 post free.

Just contact the Treasurer, Mike Weston at 71 Castle Avenue or phone him on 202059 (with a cheque or P.O. if possible) and he will very quickly ensure that a badge is in your hands.

# ST MARTINS BATTERY

## Western Heights

*Jon Iveson*

St Martins Battery was built as a coast defence battery towards the end of the nineteenth century. It seems to have been the earliest of the batteries on the Western Heights specifically intended for coast defence. Prior to this the emphasis of the defences on the Heights was to oppose attack from the landward side. The improvements in gunnery and the launching of new armoured ships made attack from the sea a real possibility and defence against it an urgent necessity.

The battery was open to the sky with three 10 inch rifled muzzle loading guns mounted in gun pits, each flanked by a shell and cartridge store. The battery went out of use at the turn of the century but in 1940, with invasion threatened, it was converted into an emergency battery mounting three 6 inch breech loading guns.

The first mention of this battery appears in 1872 when it was proposed that the two 10 inch RML guns earlier proposed for Archcliffe Fort be installed at a site on the Western Heights. A third 10 inch RML was added to the proposal when it was decided not to extend Hospital Battery from three to four guns.

As originally constructed the battery consisted of three open gunpits each flanked by a shell and cartridge store. The guns were mounted on carriages which recoiled along pivoting sloping slides. These used friction and gravity to absorb the recoil and the gun in its recoiled position would be in a convenient position for reloading down the muzzle. Rails in the bottom of the pits ran around the front of each gun to allow the ammunition to be wheeled around to the muzzle for reloading.

It was proposed that the central gun be removed and its place occupied by a new magazine. The two remaining guns were to be adapted for high angle fire. However this plan was not adopted and a new magazine was built into

the hillside in 1890. In 1895 it was suggested that the three 10 inch RMLs be replaced with two breech loading guns but this does not seem to have happened as the 1902 list of guns at Dover does not mention St Martin's Battery.

During the Second World War the battery was rebuilt as an emergency battery. The Victorian gunpits were filled with concrete, crew rooms were built behind and a concrete roof was put over



the whole battery. A Type 23 dual purpose pill-box was built adjacent to the battery to give local defence and light anti aircraft defence, and an additional square pill-box was also built. In the hill behind the battery a deep shelter was added to the Victorian magazine. Three naval 6 inch Mk VII breech loading guns were taken out of store and mounted on P VIII mountings, and the battery was ready for action by 29 September 1940. These guns, designed in 1898, fired a shell weighing 45.5 kilos to a maximum range of 11520 metres.

One of the 6 inch guns was removed soon after installation. The battery was put on a care and maintenance schedule on 23 December 1944 and the guns were finally removed in February 1947.

# THE MINERVA ORCHESTRA 1925-1999 35

=====  
NAN WHEELER  
=====

In 1925 Mr. Fred Seeley, well known in Dover for his musical prowess particularly with the 'cello, decided to form a small group of musicians to give concerts for charities and to play at local functions. They met each week to rehearse at the home of one of the members - in Minerva Avenue. Thus the Minerva Orchestra was launched.

By 1930 the group was well established with six regular players, with Fred Seeley as conductor; Mr. Gough as leader; Fred Burch, 2nd violin; Jessie Husk, pianist; Mr. Taylor, flute; and Stan Coles, 1st violin.

Numbers increased and the group twice changed venues. In the same year the Highland Light Infantry came to town and so many army bandsmen joined the group that they had to move again to larger premises in Husk's Yard. This was the peak time of the group's existence, when a 30 strong orchestra gave many concerts.

Sadly, by 1932, the conductor had gone, the bandsmen had moved and the orchestra shrank. It gained several new members, however: Daisy West (then Sawyer) who played 1st violin; Don Bailiff, who played the viola, violin, double bass or sang; Les Bailiff, violin or piano and Mrs. Beach, violin. C. Dowler took over as leader from Mr. Gough. This smaller group continued giving concerts at many venues, including the Brotherhood, Sisterhood, St. Mary's Church, St. Martin's Church and performed at civic and other functions. Some of the members, including Daisy West, joined a mandolin group, which gave weekly concerts on Dover sea front.

From 1939-46 conditions in Dover made it impossible for the group to continue. Most of the men left to serve their country. However, in 1946 Fred Seeley soon got the Minerva on its feet again, with a trio meeting in Don Bailiff's house in River one week and Fred Seeley's house

the next. Playing out consisted of civic functions again, dinners, banquets and a few charity events.

It became a quartet in 1947, when I joined the group, playing violin, as did Don Bailiff. Les Bailiff played the piano, with Fred back on the 'cello. More engagements were undertaken and the fee split among the players. There were also many more charity performances. Happy days!

Once again numbers started to grow. By the end of 1948 we were meeting at the home of Charlie Hedgecock in London Road, River. Charlie and his son Mike played violins and Charlie's cousin, Bill, led the orchestra, after Mr. Dowler, who had hoped to rejoin, sadly was unable to do so because of rheumatism. Stan Coles and Daisy West came back. Concerts were given more frequently and further afield. In fact we travelled anywhere on any day, as long as transport was provided.

With the return of Fred Burch we had to move again. In River Village Hall it seemed as if new players turned up every week. By now we had brass and woodwind players joining and we went to River School to rehearse.

Over the next few years we had many more new members. In 1948 Frank Fuller, a great character, joined us. He played the 'cello and did violin repairs for us. His father was a listed violin maker in London and Frank had his tools. In 1949 we gained the most colourful character, the clarinettist, Sam Bateman, who had played for many years in London theatres. Although he was well over seventy he cycled to our practices and local concerts. Also he looked after our stands and other equipment, repairing and maintaining them for the next ten years.

We played for pantomimes, musicals and orchestral concerts and found we had

36 insufficient time left to practise and plan new programmes. It was difficult for most of us to spare more than two nights a week. Many of our concerts were annual or twice-yearly; the alms houses in Dover, Eastry Hospital, most Dover churches, carol concerts and homes for the aged in Kearsney and Dover.

1953 was Coronation year and the Minerva Orchestra rose to the occasion with a Grand Coronation Concert in the Co-operative Hall, Maison Dieu Road, Dover, on Wednesday, 15th April, at 7.30 pm. We had a complement of 22. There were six 1st violins, five 2nd violins, 'cello, double-bass, clarinet, trombone, trumpets, percussion and pianoforte. The conductor was Fred Seeley and the leader Bill Hedgecock. The vocal solos were by Don Bailiff, who was the secretary, and the trumpet solos by Fred Crane.

In the following years the orchestra continued to meet in River, but changed meeting places several times. Fred Seeley, who had long wanted to play more 'cello, left the Minerva and joined Dover Orchestra. He was sorely missed. Then Bill

Hedgecock retired as leader due to ill health. Various leaders took over for short periods. I led for a while as a stop gap when I returned from overseas. Then when I moved away again Don Bailiff came to the rescue and conducted and George Peters took over as leader.

Concerts were given at many local venues and by 1961 we had 29 members on our lists and were meeting in Shatterlocks Primary School. Tony Marples came along with his French horn and was a real asset. From 1963 to 1967 we had several changes and additions to the orchestra. In 1968 John Hainsworth recatalogued and filed all our music, no mean task with over 300 pieces. In 1972 Frank Fuller's wife, Eva, came and played the piano. She was a really wonderful accompanist and was much in demand in Kent.

In 1972 Les Bailiff died, a bitter blow for the orchestra, who had relied on his knowledge and hard work. Then, after returning from a long holiday in South Africa, Don Bailiff died, yet another difficult place to fill. We had to spread the work around. Mr. Reg Franklin was our new conductor.

We were playing at a lot more schools at this time. Then the cost of hiring halls became an overriding factor and, for this reason, we moved to Deal Secondary School for our rehearsals and also became affiliated to the Evening Institute.

In 1975 we were fifty years old and celebrated by giving a concert of light orchestral music in St. George's Hall, Deal, on St. George's Day



Some members of the Minerva Orchestra at River School. 1951 Left to Right - Back Row. Messrs. Sutton, Hedgecock Jr., Hedgecock Sen., Gourlay, Brett, Challis, Ashley. Middle Row. Messrs. Burch, Dowler, Fuller, L.Bailiff, Coles, Wilsher. Front Row. Hedgecock (Leader), Wheeler (Mrs), Sawyer (Mrs), Seeley (Conductor), Dowler (Mrs), D.Bailiff (Organiser)



*The Minerva Orchestra at a concert in St. Richard's School Hall in 1972*

with George Peters as leader and myself as deputy. When Reg Franklin resigned, George Peters became conductor and I became leader. Tony Marples was Secretary and Linda Hayward Treasurer. We had fewer players and gave fewer concerts. When Dover Orchestra had to close we gained, as some of their players joined the Minerva.

The next major change came with the sudden death of George Peters, who had given us unselfish service since 1962. His musical knowledge and feeling for orchestral expression enabled us to reach our potential with concerts which enhanced our reputation.

In 1980 we gave a present of an engraved hip flask to Stan Coles to commemorate his membership of 50 years. He took on the difficult job of librarian and general adviser and, with our help, he checked through every set of music!

Daisy West died just before she completed 50 years service with the orchestra. Stan Coles survived only a few more years. In a short time we lost two of our first violins. In the following years there were many changes in all sections, with people moving away, or being too busy, or retiring. Our concerts had to be curtailed. At times we split up and at Deal

Music Festival in 1983 the string section and woodwind section played separate items.

In 1984 we gave two concerts, one at Eastry Hospital, a regular venue, and one at Dover Methodist Hall, our favourite old haunt.

Since then there have been many other players of all sorts and with all shapes of instruments who have come along for a few weeks or years and left for various reasons. There have also been many "friends" who will help for a concert but cannot attend regularly because of other commitments, but on whom we rely to maintain a balance. Mention must be made of our soloists. We have been able to call on some very fine vocalists from the East Kent area who have given their services free.

There is a list of members who have been with us long enough to pay a subscription, but it is too long to include here.

Now, in 1999, seven of us still meet at East Studdal, and play for our own enjoyment. We choose to play in the afternoons, as we are all retired. Two years ago I celebrated my 50 years with the orchestra and Tony Marples is still with us as Secretary/Treasurer. (Tel: 01304 202360)

Good luck, Minerva. Any more players out there?

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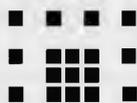
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# PROGRAMME

*Members and guests are welcome at all meetings except the Annual General Meeting which is for members only.*

SEPTEMBER 13  
Sunday 9.30  
Pencester Road  
Usual pick-up points

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Return to Dover approx. 5.50pm

OCTOBER 25  
Monday 7.30

Two Speakers:  
DAVID FAIRWIG, Managing Director, Radio Kent  
'LOCAL RADIO AND THE COMMUNITY'  
BOB RATCLIFFE, President, City of Rochester Society  
'THE DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-CHANNEL FERRIES'

NOVEMBER 22  
Monday 7.30

JOHN MOIR, Chief Executive, Dover District Council  
'MILLENNIUM DOVER AND AFTER'  
LILLIAN KAY 'CHRISTMASSES REMEMBERED'

DECEMBER 18  
Saturday 7.30

CHRISTMAS FEAST  
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JANUARY 17  
Monday 7.30

JACK WOOLFORD 'THE FIRST MILLENNIUM'  
BUDGE ADAMS 'A SURPRISE'

FEBRUARY

WINE AND WISDOM

MARCH 13  
Monday 7.30

MIKE DAWSON 'THE YMCA'  
LORRAINE SENSICLE 'DICKENS AND DOVER'

APRIL 24  
Monday 7.30

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
DONALD SYKES 'THE ZEEBRUGGE FILM'

POSSIBLE SUMMER DATES AND VISITS

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