

Philomena Kennedy

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Artist extraordinaire
Founder of the *Dover Society*

THERE can be few members who do not know that Philomena died in the early hours of the 11th of October but I am sure all members will join me in a last salute to a quite remarkable lady whose brain child was, and is, the *Dover Society*.

For many years she was the Art Mistress at the Dover Girls' Grammar School and hundreds of her pupils will remember with gratitude that Philomena opened their eyes and spurred on their abilities, not only in drawing and painting but in a wide-sweeping appreciation of the arts in general - in painting, yes, but also in architecture, drama, craftsmanship and calligraphy. And who could ever forget her "Noye's Fludd", which she produced with the extraordinary flair she had of being able to see beyond mere words.

The birth of the *Dover Society* came about because she was indignant at the lack of consideration of the effect on proposals being put forward for the development areas. She was much more than plainly indignant; she was *furiously* indignant and she used that indignation to gather around herself a group of enthusiastic like-minded people and caused them to meet in the Menzies Hall.

In her *Editorial* in the first issue of the *Newsletter* in June 1988 she says:

"As a result of considerable concern over recent events in and around Dover a number of people met on 18 March to discuss the possibility of forming a civic society. The futures of Connaught Park, Brook House,

Pencester Gardens and River Recreation Ground, combined with anxieties produced by the building of the Channel Tunnel and a desire to be involved in the development of tourism, were among the issues that brought us together".

The first meeting of the *Dover Society* took place on 25 April with about a hundred people present ... Mr Peter Johnson ... proposed "That the *Dover Society* be instituted and the Civic Trust Constitution be adopted". The resolution was passed unanimously and at the end of an article in the first *Newsletter* Mr Johnson wrote:

"I think it appropriate to record here that... I did not make the first move in bringing together the group of people who formed the steering committee. The initiative was taken by Miss Philomena Kennedy... and we are indebted to her for her concern for Dover, her enterprise and her powers of persuasion".

The early issues of the *Newsletter* demonstrate her enthusiasm and inventiveness and her calligraphy and delightful drawings set the tone. She designed the "logo" that has had its present form since May 1989 and it has become the Society's "trade-mark".

Philomena's inspired production of the *Newsletter* was overtaken by events in September 1990 and the size and format had to change. I became responsible for design and production and it has been my constant regret that I was unable to continue the spontaneity and "wackiness" that Philomena, with her superb abilities, was able to infuse into everything she did.

She, has left her stamp on the Society, and my life, as well as that of many others, has been much enriched by knowing her.

Budge Adams

Footnote: Philomena left to the Society two boxes of her notes, quizzes and a full set of Newsletters.