

PROJECTS *Update*

JOHN OWEN, Chairman, Projects Sub-Committee

SOCIETY TREES *looking great for the 21st Century*

APPROACHING THE CLOSE of the century a group of members turned out on Sunday, 5th December to revisit the Society's plantings of the early nineties. We met at the Avenue, Temple Ewell, in mild and brilliantly sunny weather, climbing through rough woodland to Lousyberry Wood a short distance away. Having lost, in the 1987 hurricane, a considerable number of beech trees, a species characteristic of the area, one could not fail to notice the contrast between the area left to regenerate naturally and that which the Society had replanted with predominantly beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) but with some wild cherry (*Prunus avium*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*).

The conspicuous leaves of the beech, amongst the many otherwise bare branches, clearly indicated the precise location of the plantings among the naturally regenerated ash, holly and bramble. Ranging in height from 5ft to 10ft they were clearly well established and competing well. We also identified a number of the now leafless field maple and wild cherry and had a number of pleasant surprises. One was the finding of what appeared to be a very mature 12 to 15ft field maple. Surely not one of ours, we thought! - until, on clearing the dense brambles, we discovered our stake, shelter and tree mat. This was the give away. Planted in dense growth we had not seen it for some time, but how well it

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apparently liked the spot we had chosen!

Where tree planting is concerned one is always on a learning curve. Our experience to date is that the careful planting of the 30cm saplings, using tree shelters, stakes and tree mats, with follow-up management, has really paid off, by enabling the trees to hold their own in Nature's scramble for regeneration. What is certain is, that without a structured tree planting operation, we would not now have any beech trees there at all. All things being equal, the new century should see them growing to maturity and, in due time, will replicate the pre-1987 beech wood so well remembered.

Having had coffee *al fresco*, our second port of call was Lydden Pond, the scene of another Dover Society project.



'Woolfords Willow' - Lydden Pond

On this occasion we focussed on "Woolford's Willow", the weeping willow (*Salix alba tristis*) planted by Jack Woolford in 1991 during Environment Week, assisted by children from Lydden village school. Still in leaf, we found the willow to be progressing well and developing the characteristic profile which enhances the location and is perhaps best viewed from "The Bell", to which we retired, by way of ending our

6 last Society tree visit of the century.

As has become customary, our visits coincided with NATIONAL TREE WEEK, organised each year by the Tree Council, now celebrating its Silver Jubilee. Sponsored by Esso, the theme for 1999 was "Millennium Trees - our past, our

future" and, with the help from member organisations, the Council hopes that more than a million trees will have been planted during the week. Many churches in the Dover area are planting a yew tree as part of the celebrations for the year 2000 AD.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

SPRING 2000

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE at the continuing rate of £6 single and £10 joint membership, such a bargain that members have said that if the amount were greater they would remember to pay more promptly! However, it is possible to avoid such concerns by arranging a standing order, as almost one third of members have done. Alternatively, payment at the AGM in April will be much appreciated.

We are pleased that our numbers have reached 400 again and we are grateful to those who have introduced recent new members whom we welcome. They are Mrs. E.Higgins, Mrs. M.Hopper, Mrs. D.Bushell. Mrs. J.Vardon, Mr. J. and Mrs. C.Bevan, Revd. M.Crwldy, Ms. T.George, Mr. K. and Mrs. J.Tranter and Mr. J. and Mrs. N.Clayton.

Death severely affected our membership this year. Not only have we lost our founder, Philomena Kennedy, but also Major R.C. Frisby, Captain Tom Manton, Mrs. Helen Williams, Mr. John Stoddart, Miss Bettine Rogers, Mr. Ernie Baker and Mr. Hugh Bax. Mr. Baker and Mr. Bax were regular attenders at meetings and contributed to the Newsletter. Ernie Baker was also a cheerful distributor. All are now much missed. We send our sympathy to the families of all these late members.

SHEILA R. COPE, Membership Secretary

Launch of the Bronze Age Boat

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Our Chairman Jeremy Cope and a few other members of the Dover Society were among a select band of guests invited to the public "launch of Dover's celebrated Bronze Age Boat".

Our contribution of £1,250 to the trust fund set up to save, restore and preserve the 3,600 year old craft was acknowledged during the ceremony at Dover Museum where the boat is now on view. Dover Bronze Age Boat Trust, of which museum curator Christine Waterman is administrative secretary, has received more than £2.5 million in donations. The major contributor was the Heritage Lottery Fund which provided £1.2 million. Dover Town Council gave £3,000 and Kent County Council another £3,000.

The money has not only saved the boat, discovered in our town centre seven years ago, but also provided an excellent gallery, where the craft now rests on a specially built cradle. The boat is now on loan to Dover District Council for 25 years and the local authority has pledged to ensure it is kept safe in the temperature and humidity controlled glass case in the gallery.

A 12 minute video film at the gallery shows in detail where the boat was discovered by Dover archaeologist Keith Parfitt, how it was sliced into 37 pieces to bring it to the surface and how conservation started before the freeze-drying operation at the Mary Rose Trust at Portsmouth.

The gallery, well worth a visit, offers many other attractions, including a visit to a Bronze Age hut and an opportunity to ring date a tree. There is a wealth of archaeological material, including, on loan from the British Museum, 350 Bronze Age tools recovered from a wreck on the seabed off Langdon Bay.