

26 **CARNIVAL OF THE PLANETS
AND THE 3RD MILLENNIUM CLOCK**

NEW YEAR'S DAY, 2000 by Merril Lilley

The second evening of the Millennium celebrations again started from Dover College grounds, this time in the form of a Mardi Gras style carnival with ten sections of the procession, each representing one of the planets of the solar system led by the sun. In anticipation of the event crowds started forming hours before the start. Some stayed on the sea front to make sure of a good view of the clock bonfire, others flocked to the Market Square or other vantage points along the route.

We decided to take up a position along Castle Street to view the procession as it left the Market Square and headed for the sea front. We could hear the Mardi Gras music of the bands and the ripple of amazement and delight from the crowds long before the first section of the carnival reached us. Nothing had prepared us for the sheer extravagance and inventiveness in the depiction of the planets, each as splendid and colourful as the next; each with its own special theme, individual style of costume and its own high, sculptured standard bearer, leading each section. After the vivid red and orange colours of the sun, the nine planets each with its own distinctive colour co-ordination, passed us in turn, ending with the stark, black-and white, skeleton-like depiction of Pluto. The mood of the carnival was of total celebration in the happy event, encouraging the thousands of

spectators to join in with them, pulsating in time to the music. We marvelled at the amount of work which must have gone into the making of the elaborate costumes, in workshops all over the district which had started as early as October. The participants in the carnival were of all ages and from many organisations from Dover and from the surrounding villages.

As the procession passed many of the onlookers joined the tail of it and followed it along Townwall Street and on to the promenade, which was so crowded it was impossible for latecomers to gain a vantage point to see the Clock of the Third



Millennium. When all the sections of the Carnival of the Planets had reached the beach, the large mechanical structure of the clock was brought to life in a spectacle of lights, sound and pyrotechnic effects.

These had hardly died away when it was time for the start of a magnificent firework display, staged from the cliff top at Dover Castle and best viewed from the promenade. This must be one of the best

displays ever seen in Dover and attracted one of the largest crowds for many years. As the tired but happy spectators made

their way to homes or cars there was nothing but praise for the organisers and all who took part in the carnival.

Photos: B. Lilley



FOOTNOTE

The response to the 'Millennium Clocks' celebrations has been overwhelmingly positive. Dover District Council, Strange Cargo Arts Company and all the other organisations involved, very much hope that the interest generated across the White Cliffs Country will continue in the future. The next major event planned for the whole community is 'Turning Wave', the third and final part of the 'Millennium Trilogy', which will take place in Dover on Friday, 8th December, 2000, as part of the Yuletide Festival. If you are interested in taking part, please contact the Millennium and Events Planning Hotline on 01304 872077 and more details will be sent to you as soon as they are available. In the meantime for information on forthcoming celebrations and workshops look in the local press or pick up a copy of the monthly 'What's On' diary from libraries, area offices and Tourist Information centres.

Jae Fowler

MILLENNIUM GRANTS UPDATE

Part of Dover District Council's Millennium programme is the Millennium Capital and Revenue Grant Scheme. This scheme is open to grant applications from groups and organisations towards the cost of projects and events designed to celebrate the Millennium. Funding is available from now until January 1st, 2001 and applications are welcomed for projects across the Dover district.

Applications can be submitted to the capital scheme at any time. Funds may still be available for revenue grants. Please ring the Millennium Office on 01304 872020. Generally speaking, capital projects are those which involve buildings or equipment and revenue projects are those which support events or activities.

Many projects have already received support from the scheme. With a theme of 'Our Future - Their Future' the scheme's particular emphasis is on the youth of the district and bridging the gap between generations. Encouraging links with Europe, improving the local environment and increasing community spirit are also important aims. Funding has been granted to Millennium celebration events in Northbourne, a community pantomime in Ash, the floodlighting of St. Clement's Church tower in Sandwich and the creation of a keep-fit trail in Capel-le-Ferne.

To discuss any project ideas your group or organisation has, or to request an application pack, please telephone the Dover District Council Millennium and Events Planning Hotline on 01304 872077 and leave your name, address and telephone number.

Jae Fowler