

12 (which were expected to arrive circa 22 September, via Hawkinge!!) Then, aged 17½ years, Frank joined the Home Guard and stood sentry at the Harbour Clock Tower. He enjoyed the excitement of the battle between aircraft at 30,000ft and rejoiced when an enemy machine was shot down. He also viewed the low level destruction of barrage balloons, and Stukas diving on the harbour.

The family along with three-quarters of the population were evacuated. Frank said he remembered the faces of the children awaiting evacuation, clutching their little gasmasks, but, more than that he remembered the faces of their mothers, trying not to cry. Some evacuees were treated well, he said, and some were treated badly and many of them came back to Dover before the war ended.

The Woodbridge family went to South Wales. Frank wanted to volunteer

for the army but was dissuaded from doing so by his father who had experienced the carnage of the World War I. Eventually from there he was conscripted into the South Wales Borderers.

He was taken prisoner and spent the later part of the war in Eastern Europe where he saw the devastation of the Allies' bombing and the treatment meted out to the Jewish and Russian prisoners. He realised that war was not just a competition between machines but involved human suffering. 'On the whole,' he said, 'I think we did very well. I think the British are a nation to be proud of.... as far as fighting was concerned I always felt there wasn't a better soldier in the world!'

He concluded that in war everyone was a loser and so one had to work to win the peace. In the post-war period he worked with NALCO for the betterment of the workers' lot.

WHO HUNG THE MONKEY?

*Jack Woolford's address,
reported by himself*

What later became Hartlepool had been occupied from c.3000BC by a sequence of asylum seekers, Neolithic if not Paeolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages, Celts, Romans, Picts, Scots, Angles and Saxons, Jutes, Danes and Normans (etc, etc). By 500AD it was part of the kingdom of Northumbria and the king's daughter Hilda established a monastery there in 639. Transferred as Abbess to Whitby, she chaired the Synod of 664 which settled the dispute between Celtic and Roman Catholics. St Hilda's Gothic Church, which splendidly survives, dates from c.1240.

The place was named Herterpol because it was the harbour for the

manor of Hart which by the time of the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 was owned by the Brus family. It had received a municipal Charter from King John in 1201 (now 801 years ago) and the seal portrayed a hart at bay to a hound (not a monkey) on its back in a pool. It acted as port for the Bishopric of Durham, the county Palatine then on the border with hostile Scotland. Consequently it had to be fortified against raids with a thirteenth century wall, parts of which also splendidly survive.

At the time of the Spanish Armada (1588) it was one of a chain of warning beacons. A message to the Mayor was misread as "No more frying of the bacon", whereupon frying pans were collected and buried. It was later re-read as "No more firing of the beacon". Presumably the frying pans were



recovered. Like the later monkey-hanging it is a good story, reminiscent of gibes against the Irish, etc, etc, which although funny are obviously invented.

With the Act of Union of 1707, Scotland was no longer an enemy and Hartlepool declined into a fishing port and in the eighteenth century became a spa/resort because there was a chalybeate spring on the Fish Sands. Consequently natives failed to notice the Industrial Revolution of Coal, Steam, Steel and Rail and it was outsiders who spotted that new collieries could export coal if the harbour were improved and if a railway was built. This was in direct competition with the Stockton and Darlington Railway of 1825 which, however had only the shallow mouth of the Tees for ships. By 1835 Hartlepool was exporting coal and shortly

afterwards building ships. Teesside entrepreneurs therefore built a railway to Hartlepool but could not compete because they could not buy land adjacent to the docks because Hartlepool had pre-empted them and had to have their wagons hauled up a slope to tip coal into the holds of boats in Hartlepool docks. Another outsider, Ralph Ward Jackson, resented this and, determined to create 'the Liverpool of the North-East', succeeded in 1847 in getting an Act of Parliament to create the West Hartlepool Improvement Commissioners who immediately built new docks and fashioned Christ's Church from the limestone blasted from the new harbour. Unrestricted by old boundaries, West Hartlepool successfully expanded, becoming a Borough in 1887 and a County Borough (over 60,000 population) in 1902, with

14 wider streets and bigger shops, churches, hotels and a park to match.

It was only in the early 1850s, precisely at the time when the two Hartlepoons were at each others' throats about the docks that the gibe "Who Hung the Monkey?" was first recorded. It was alleged that during the Napoleonic Wars (1802-25) a French ship was wrecked and its only survivor, a monkey, was hanged on the shore by fishermen who thought it was a French spy. Ned Corvan, a local pub entertainer, then wrote and composed a song "The Fishermen Hung the Monkey-o" which was an immediate and persistent success. Postcards of it appeared in the 1890s. There were no contemporary English or French reports of the wreck, and similar tales are told of Boddam in Aberdeenshire and Mevagissey in Cornwall. Like the frying of the bacon, the hanging of the monkey implied that Old but not West Hartlepuddians were slow and stupid:

but only in hindsight.

From 1850 until 1918 both towns prospered, building ships and ships' engines by the thousand, exporting tons of coal by the million, importing pit props for the neighbouring collieries by the million and catching and selling fish by tens of millions. There were, of course, booms and slumps and when unemployment was high, both tried to revive themselves as seaside health resorts (despite gale-blown showers of sand, cement, sawdust and the scents of fish-curing) with promenades, bandstands, bowling greens, bathing pools, etc. to relieve unemployment. Both enjoyed full employment through the two World Wars, although both suffered from naval bombardment and zeppelin raids in the First and from aerial bombardment in the Second.

Although they shared an MP from 1868 and the LNER railways owned all the docks long before 1900, it was only



in 1967 that they were reluctantly united into the Borough of Hartlepool with one council and one mayor, but by that time both had declined. The shipyards and steelworks could compete neither for size nor cost with European and Asiatic builders, then oil and gas discoveries and closure of all the local coal mines killed coal exports and timber imports. Overfishing destroyed yet another staple. Apart from some light industry (and a nuclear power station) only the resort option was left. Hartlepool has virtually been demolished and rebuilt with a marina, a museum, a pub and restaurants, superstore, historic boats moored by historic quays, churches converted into art galleries or indoor swimming pools with a pub and a night club. Even the image of the monkey has been revived. Tourism feeds on publicity.



WINE & WISDOM FEBRUARY 2002

Reported by Ken Wraight

On February 18 some 90 Dover Society members and friends gathered in St. Mary's Parish Centre for the annual Wine and Wisdom evening. Clive Taylor and his team provided the questions and organised the marking and scoring which, as always, was impeccably done.

During the interval, while we pondered over what a Dingbat box with several Es in it could possibly mean, a splendid Ploughman's Lunch was provided with wine or soft drink.

The winning team, with a score of 80%, certainly deserved to win the annual, much-coveted prize of engraved glasses (many thanks again to The Trophy Shop for completing the engraving in record time!) and the three teams which tied for second place with a respectable 72% had to be content with bars of chocolate.

Our thanks to Joan Liggett and all those who helped to make the evening a success.