

Each was inspected periodically by an employee of the council to ensure that it was serviceable and clean, and provided with a seat cushion and a rug. The owners were also inspected to ensure that they were 'sober, of good repute, respectably dressed and clean'. Any who failed inspection were prohibited from working. They were hired by time, the usual being a minimum of an hour.

Chairs were specially recommended 'for widows and matrons of forty years of age and above'. When such a lady went out to tea a chair man was hired and informed of the time when he was to return to take the lady home. Fastidious passengers could use their own cushion and rug if they wished, and were encouraged to report to the Commissioners of the Paving Act of any shortcomings in the service provided.

Regrettably some accidents did occur. For instance there is a record of 1830. A respected matron was being pushed down the rough track which later became

Durham Hill when the chair man stumbled and released the chair, which gathered speed and eventually deposited the respected matron on to the bank, displaying her naked lower limbs to the public gaze. A social disaster indeed!

One wonders what people of that time would have thought about our modern delightful bikini clad girls!

The provisions for porters appear to have lasted well into the 19th century, since in the Paving Act of 1810 it was the Commissioners who licensed 'porters and sedan chair men' though a provision was made to 'preserve the ancient rights of the mayor and jurats in respect of the old established town porters'. By this means the ancient rights of the mayor and jurats were added to those of the commissioners of the new paving acts.

This is the only reference I have been able to find of the officially approved use of sedan chairs in the town, but there may of course be others.

## B.O.O.K R.E.V.I.E.W *from Terry Sutton*

The Terror before Trafalgar - Nelson, Napoleon and the Secret War

*by Tom Pocock*

**T**he part played by Dover and Deal in the secret war waged against Napoleon before Trafalgar is revealed in a new book just published. *The Terror before Trafalgar - Nelson, Napoleon and the Secret War* (James Murray: £20) tells how Walmer Castle (the official residence of the Lord Warden) became the hub of intelligence-gathering about French invasion plans against Britain. Author Tom Pocock, an authority on the life of Nelson, recalls the days when the Admiral's fleet was anchored off Deal and his trips ashore to rendezvous with Lady Emma Hamilton in the Royal Hotel (then called The Three Kings). British spies were

shipped out of Dover and Deal by former smugglers to glean information around the port of Boulogne where Napoleon's invasion fleet was building up. Experiments on new fangled weapons - submarines and mines - were carried out off Walmer Castle after being taken on board secretly at Dover. Traditional naval officers were disgusted at this kind of warfare with few realising the implications to Britannia's rule of the waves if the enemy copied these new weapons.

Anyone with an interest in the Napoleonic era, or the history of the Dover area, will find this book fascinating.