

The London Road church was built by the 'Prims' in 1901 to replace the Peter Street building. On 31 August 2003, London Road Methodist Church ceased to exist as such, but began a new life as the home of 'The Beacon Church' uniting the members of London Road, Tower Hamlets and the United Reformed Church in a new venture. River Methodist Church is still with us. Apparently a visiting Methodist preacher spoke to a small crowd outside Tritton's bakery in Common Lane in 1834 and when the River Workhouse closed in 1836, Wesleyans moved into the vacant building (now River House in Valley Road) until they were expelled in 1842. We know that a visiting preacher held services in a cottage next to the Royal Oak in 1871. Serv-

ices were held subsequently in two rooms in a cottage behind the Royal Oak. The chapel in Common Lane (now the church hall) was built on land donated by Mr Churchward of Kearsney Abbey and was opened in 1876 at a cost of £162 plus £80 for the adjoining cottage. The adjoining Lewisham Road site was acquired in 1935 for a new church, but the war intervened. The new church finally opened in 1956 and was soon followed by new school rooms for the expanding Sunday School. River Methodists and Anglican friends at St Peter's in River enjoy a very good relationship and intend to put it on a more formal footing. Nationally, the Anglican and Methodist Churches are renewing their efforts to unite. I think Wesley would approve.

Dover and the 18th century Sea Wolves

by Ivan Green

In the 18th century Dover was the premier port for cross channel ships, and the centre of much coastal seaborne traffic, principally the distribution of goods from the Western ports of France, Spain and the Western Mediterranean. These miscellaneous goods were imported by increasingly prosperous Dover merchants and stored in bulk in the warehouses beside the harbour. There were two shipyards, a small one dealing mostly with running repairs, and the manufacture of ropes and rigging, and a large one producing sea-going ships, especially the famous Dover fast and nimble sloops.

Besides legitimate enterprises there were

others of questionable legality. One of these yards was the home base of local privateers which preyed on French and Spanish ships in the Channel. Of these, one was owned and operated by a Dover mayor, John Bazely. A privateer was distinguished from a pirate by operating under Letters of Marque, issued by the sovereign, but this was only recognised in England. To other nations such a ship was only classed as, and dealt with, as a pirate. Others, often called 'Sea Wolves' were just pirates, preying principally in the Atlantic and off the shores of central and south America, much as Drake and Frobisher had done a couple of centuries earlier. These, for obvious reasons

could not usually use large naval ports like London and Portsmouth. Dover's diverse activities formed a convenient cover for building pirate ships and repairing and provisioning them.

Spanish domination. His activities were officially frowned upon, but tolerated, by the British authorities. He was a most successful pirate, even capturing the *Gamo*, the large Spanish treasure ship, and this exploit



Speedy capturing Gamo

One such ship, built and often provisioned in Dover, was the *Speedy*. A fast and very manoeuvrable three-masted brig of 158 tons and carrying 14 guns, the largest being a 14 pounder. She, like others of her type, was launched in Dover in June 1781 and was the very first command of Cochrane, known as the 'Sea Wolf'. Later in his career he became an admiral. Cochrane was a superb seaman, reckoned to be superior in this respect to everyone except the great Admiral Nelson himself. He preyed on French and Spanish ships and was instrumental in helping to free central and south American settlements from

is shown in the painting.

Note that he rammed the *Gamo* amidships, a favourite manoeuvre of the very early Dover Cinque Port seamen, a tactic only possible by a fine captain, a good crew, and a superbly handling ship.

The crews of such ships received no wages, but were given a share in the booty captured from successful raids. Many a local inn and small business was financed by such adventures. Indeed, it was one of the very few ways in which an ordinary sailor could ever acquire any capital to set up in business for himself.