

controlling neutral Norway. Unfortunately, this gave Hitler the excuse to invade Denmark and Norway. The Anglo-French force sent to Norway met with disaster and the government, with a large Tory majority, was heavily criticised. Chamberlain was the focus for the opposition, 'You have sat too long. For God's sake go!' Churchill stayed loyal. Following a vote of confidence, a coalition government was decided upon, but Labour would not have Chamberlain as prime minister. Churchill was preferred over Halifax and on 10 May 1940 he became prime minister, fulfilling what he thought was his destiny. Very quickly he formed a small war cabinet comprising five politicians and the three service heads with himself as Minister of Defence - making it much easier for the Prime Minister and the Minister to agree! His policy was made clear to everyone with his 'Blood, toil, tears and sweat' speech, creating the atmosphere to prosecute the war certain of ultimate victory, despite the overwhelming might of

Germany.

Churchill in charge was a mixed blessing for those in command. He was a nightmare with fingers in every pie and wanted to be everywhere, despite being 65 in 1940. George VI had to stop him from joining in the Normandy landings. His example made a big impact upon the troops, exuding confidence based upon knowledge from personal experience fighting in the Boer Wars and the First World War when out of office.

Party politics returned with the general election campaign of 1945. The Tories made a grave mistake in concentrating their efforts upon Churchill, the man who had won the war, as the man for winning the peace, rather than pushing peace time policies. Labour won a landslide victory. Churchill was out, but time had produced the right man for the hour.

So ended another fascinating talk by Reg Colman delivered, as always, without any notes and ending bang on time much to the delight of our Chairman!

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE ROYAL CINQUE PORTS

A talk by Dick Bolton..... *Reported by Merril Lilley*

The second speaker of the evening, Lt. Col. Dick Bolton, gave a witty and entertaining address on various aspects of the Cinque Ports, with appropriate illustrations.

He first reminded his audience of the names of the ports, the principal

ones of Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich, which were the original five, and the two 'Antient Towns' of Winchelsea and Rye, which later became head ports in their own right.

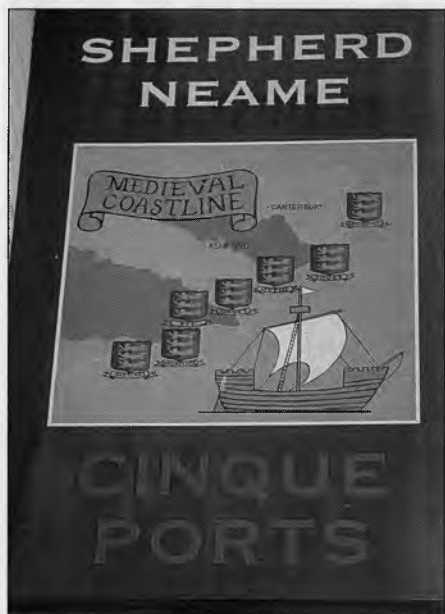
He began with some historical



Deal Port Coat of Arms



New Romney Coat of Arms



Rye Coat of Arms



Sandwich Guildhall Coat of Arms

background to his subject, telling that the custom of Ship Service to the crown started in the time of Edward the Confessor, or possibly earlier than that. The Domesday book mentions that 21 ships were supplied by Dover alone.

The ships were in service for 15 days in every year, not like an organised navy but a collection of local ships, normally engaged in fishing and trade. They gave their services at their own expense for the 15 days and at the expense of the Crown for any days thereafter. For their services the Cinque Ports men were granted special privileges, including the right to hold their own courts, exemption from national taxes and freedom of trade. This meant they had the opportunity, with their larger and better boats, to take the 'lion's share' of the lucrative North Sea herring trade and land their catch free of charge at Great Yarmouth, where the annual Yarmouth Herring Fair was held. The Cinque Ports men controlled the fair and appointed bailiffs to collect dues. Needless to say, this caused some contention with the Yarmouth fishermen!

Another privilege they held was the ancient honour of supporting the canopy held over the king and queen of England at every coronation. Cinque Ports men held the canopy for the coronation of Richard I and were still performing this honour by the reign of James II. After this, while they may not have carried the canopy they were allowed to attend the ceremony, except at the coronation of



Dover Mace



Sandwich Coat of Arms

Queen Victoria. Even at the coronation of Edward VII they were again given places and carried the National standards.

The main meeting place was at their own Court of Shepway, with two smaller courts of Brodhull and Guestling. The Court of Shepway was presided over by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The other two courts are now merged into 'The Court of Brotherhood and Guestling' which controls the internal workings of the federation.

Our speaker spoke of various Lord

Wardens, mentioning, in particular, the Duke of Wellington, Winston Churchill and the last Warden, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

He ended by describing various coats of arms and emblems of the Cinque Ports. He mentioned the mace and the pendant still used by the Mayor of Dover, both of which depict St. Martin, the three demi-lions and demi-ships on the shield of Sandwich, the windows in Dover Town Hall and the Queen Mother's banner at Walmer Castle.

## *The January 2004 Meeting*

### **THE RINGLEMERE FINDS ..... *Reported by Derek Leach***



The Ringlemere Cup

*Photo: Dover Express*

Advertised as a talk by Keith Parfitt (Canterbury Archaeological Trust) about the Woodnesborough Gold Cup, it was soon evident that, whilst it was the most important find on the Ringlemere Farm site near Woodnesborough, it was only part of a much bigger story that the site could tell.

On Bodmin Moor in 1837 a prominent mound was spotted by labourers. Inside was a stone lined burial chamber containing a skeleton and a gold cup, now known as the Rillerton Gold Cup, about the size of a half pint mug. This Bronze Age find was unique in Britain until November 2001 when a metal detector enthusiast found something very similar at Ringlemere, albeit damaged by ploughing machinery. It was