

--- The 17th --- Annual General Meeting

report by Merril Lilley

The seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on Monday, 18th April, 2005 at St. Mary's Parish Centre. The attendance was even greater than usual, with almost a hundred members packing the hall and the interval raffle making a record £118.00.

The Chairman, Derek Leach, announced that there would be a change of speaker for the evening. Paul Watkins, who was preparing for the General Election, would be replaced by Professor Philip Robinson, taking as his subject "French as she is Sung". He then opened proceedings by welcoming all those present. The Secretary read out apologies for absence and the minutes of the last meeting were accepted. The Chairman mentioned the loss of members who had died during the last year and the audience observed a minute's silence.

In presenting his report, the Chairman said it had been a very successful year and it had been a privilege to represent the Society at various functions throughout the year. Among those he had attended in that capacity were the St. George's Day ceremony, the mayor-making and the installation of the new Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. He said that when he attended such events he became aware of how highly the Society was regarded in the town and how hard the members of the Executive Committee worked, both by attending meetings and behind the scenes.

One of the highlights of this year was the publication of the book *A Tribute to Budge Adams* in pictures, which sold out in

three weeks. Every member of the Society received a free copy as a memorial to Budge and this was greatly appreciated. A follow-up CD is in preparation by the same team consisting of the Chairman, Bob Hollingsbee and Peter and Julie Burville.

The Chairman said members were kept informed of all activities and events through the excellent Newsletter. There had been concern at the beginning of April that a new editor had not been found but, since then, a volunteer had come forward and was already taking up the reins. He ended by thanking the members of the Executive Committee and of the Planning Committee for all their work during the year and also all the members who gave their help, both indoors and out.

The Treasurer then presented the end-of-year accounts, with reference to the report which was available on each seat. He was happy to report the healthy state of the general fund, this year making a surplus of £1111-38. The main elements influencing it were subscriptions, outings, meetings, the Newsletter, administration costs, interest from our bank accounts and donations. At present membership stood at 445. All the meetings and outings except one covered their costs. For the success of our outings we must thank our Social Secretary, Joan Liggett. Once again he explained to members how important it was to book early for trips, as many of these (for example, Chatham Dockyard) required deposits in advance. As always, raffles contributed a good deal towards

booking fees for the hall and thus helped to cover the cost of indoor meetings. He thanked Sheila Cope for organising the raffles. The cost of producing the Newsletter was helped by advertising and by donations, this year £300 from Pfizer Ltd. He praised the high standard of the Newsletter, of which, he said, we should be justly proud. He thanked the editor and the advertising manager. Gift Aid, he said, was a huge benefit for the Society, this year amounting to £662-58, and he urged members who paid tax to sign up for this benefit, if they had not already done so.

The Chairman then called on other members of the committee to give their reports. Joan Liggett thanked all those who had helped at indoor meetings, mentioning Muriel Golding and Sybil Standing in particular. She thanked all members who attended outings for their enthusiasm and support, and, once again, urged members to book early.

Lesley Gordon spoke on various projects and on a report from Jeremy Cope, who was unable to be present. At Cowgate Cemetery the whole of the area had now been cleared and the teams were now moving on to a stage of maintenance. Jeremy Cope thanked and praised the two teams of volunteers who had monthly sessions at the site. He thanked members for donations of money and equipment, like strimmers, essential tools. He invited members to join the happy bunch of workers and to see it as a free get-fit club.

On the subject of recording the gravestones, Lesley reported that, here also, the work was finished. She went on to read Jeremy's account of the River Dour project. All three of these reports were lengthy, full details appearing elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Jack Woolford gave a planning report and was challenged by the Chairman to complete it in three minutes. He said some things were NOT SO GOOD. We did

not get the Heathfield Home Zone or Farthingloe Golf Course or the development of the Castle Street night club and there was no resolution on the Langdon Cliffs gate. In the town many businesses had gone: Pencester Stagecoach Office, Benson Shoes, Courts, Kent Photo and the Co-op. Other items were listed as GOOD, including Maison Dieu House - now the site of Dover Town Council, the town centre trees, Dover in Bloom, the berths at Western Docks, the cruise terminals and the marina. Danish State Railways had made an application to replace Connex. He said we were pleased with the improvement in the Dover Christmas lights and switch-on and with the continuing development of the River Dour scheme. He then listed a number of projects, ONGOING, which had not come to fruition and left us wondering what the future held. These were projects like the Seasport Centre, the Buckland Paper Mill, the St. James development, the Cherry Tree scrap yard, a Western Heights hotel and the old Army Recruiting Office. He ended with some items he felt had to be classed as BAD: the DHB berths which did not fit, the A2 dualling postponed, the problem of traffic on Townwall Street and the cost of demolishing Burlington House (£2m).

Merril Lilley, giving her report on the Newsletter, said that issue 52 was her last as editor. She had enjoyed the job for fourteen years. She introduced the new editor, Alan Lee, and hoped that he would do likewise.

The elections were rapidly dealt with. There were no objections and the officers were re-elected en bloc. To end the proceedings our President, Brigadier Maurice Atherton, presented a picture to the retiring editor.

After the interval the speaker was Philip Robinson. His talk is reported by Jack Woolford.