

SOCIETY PROJECTS

COWGATE CEMETERY - CLEARANCE

♦ ♦ A report by Jeremy Cope ♦ ♦

Picture the scene - balmy summer days in Cowgate with the rustics sipping champagne in their break discussing the complications resulting from the recent European Union referenda. At our last Thursday meeting we toasted the health of our oldest member, Jack Woolford, on his 88th birthday. Not only do we offer good weather to Cowgate workers but longevity is fast becoming another bonus.

It is striking the amount of growth that occurs in May and June. The grass and vegetation have shot up giving the whole cemetery a lush and verdant aspect. Against this background we have continued with the work of mowing paths, controlling undesirable weeds and checking that undergrowth does not re-establish itself.

Our success is due to our enthusiastic team of volunteers who regularly turn out to either one or both of our monthly working sessions. New volunteers are always welcome, just phone 211348 for details.



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COWGATE CEMETERY - RECORDING

♦ ♦ A report by Lesley Gordon ♦ ♦

At the end of last year, the small cemetery recording team were able to report completion of their work. Information on all remaining legible headstones in the graveyard, not previously recorded by Miss Jane de Bourbel in the 1980s, had been captured and grave locations mapped where possible. The complete work was passed to the local branch of the Kent Family History Society for comment, prior to presentation to the Dover Museum and Dover District Council. As previously reported, they kindly offered to put the whole work on microfiche to ensure easier access by the general public. In addition, they suggested certain amendments to improve the presentation of the work and provide more background information about the project.

This work was completed in March this year and the two tomes of information were then handed over to their microfiche specialist in Ashford. This summer, the originals, once handed back, can be presented to the Museum and Council. In addition, microfiche copies will be available, not just to them, but, for a small fee, to any members of the general public desiring copies for their own use. It transpired that The Kent Family History Society already had Miss de Bourbel's gravestone recordings, neatly typed, on microfiche, but not in plot and then numerical grave order, although that can be ascertained from the index. The Dover Society's records do (thanks to sterling work by Ian Murton) include her work in, more or less, the right order, although the

typing of the inscriptions is less easily readable. Researchers will, therefore, have a choice when locating graves recorded by her.

So, the Society has achieved its aim of recording all gravestones, and mapping them. A word of warning, however, Miss de Bourbel recorded over four hundred graves and this Society only slightly less. Yet there must be many graves where the headstone had already succumbed to the elements before (or since) Miss de Bourbel set the ball rolling twenty years ago. For

any family researcher it will be a matter of luck whether their forebears are in one of the graves or tombs where information has been captured. If not, then they must seek information from the full register of 7250 people buried in the cemetery between 1837 and the 1950s. A call to Madeleine Whitcombe at Dover District Council or via "burials@dover.gov.uk" with details of the name and date of death should yield at least the grave reference and (with the help of the Society's maps) the approximate location of the grave.

THE RIVER DOUR

◆◆ A report by Jeremy Cope ◆◆



Since my last report matters have slowed somewhat. An important matter that should have been resolved in the early days is the legal relationship between the members of the Group. For a body involving itself in construction projects and maintenance of the river, members have to be quite clear of their commitments, legal responsibilities and liabilities. Matters are complicated because any work will be carried out on other people's property.

Following discussion on a draft constitution Jeremy Burgess of the



Environment Agency, Nick Delaney of Dover District Council and myself were asked to make a proposal to the Group. The proposal has now been circulated and I hope will enable us to resolve the matter. In the meantime work on the river has ground to a halt. I am not entirely sure why, although the absence of a constitution is quoted as the reason. I trust that our proposals will allow us to resume activities and that my next report will be much more positive.

