

# SOCIETY MEETINGS

**November**

## **"THE FUTURE OF KENT"**

**A talk by Cllr Richard King, KCC - Reported by Jack Woolford**

Until recently Cabinet Member for Structure Plan and Transport, now Chairman of Planning, Richard King, said that the world was screwed up by climate change; witness the virtual disappearance of birds, etc. In comparison, the deposition of Saddam Hussein and the recent earthquakes and floods, etc, were trivial whereas the melting of the polar ice-caps and world-wide pollution were our fault. Our grandchildren would ask why, knowing about it, we did nothing.

The London Barrage, designed for rare emergencies, had had to be used sixteen times in the last year. Romney Marsh would soon be under water. Yet the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (John Prescott) main concern was how many thousands more houses should be built in Kent whilst thousands of new houses were being

demolished in the North. In the Kent countryside, orchards as well as footpaths and hedges had disappeared because supermarkets demanded standard apples but only paid farmers 8% of the shop price. It was nonsensical to import fruit from abroad we could grow ourselves.

What Kent's 600 councillors and parish councillors wanted was low growth for Kent's own population, not incomers from elsewhere. The Kent Structure Plan sought this, but the Deputy Prime Minister's South East Region's (nominated) Assembly's Spatial Strategy with its East (including Ashford) and West Kent Sub-Regions, insisted on houses by the thousand every year for the next twenty years. It was madness all round and he (Richard King) was glad he would be dead by the time it all happened.

## **"BRAINSTORMING SESSION"**

There was general support for seeking to open up the Bleriot Memorial. The centenary is in 2009 and stresses the need for any scheme. Alan Lee has found that the memorial is owned by English Heritage but the maintenance, cutting the grass adjacent to the memorial, has been carried out free of charge by DDC. However DDC is reconsidering its commitment and may discontinue next year.

Adeline proposed that the Pencester bandstand was in the wrong place and a more appropriate situation was Granville Gardens, the site of the pre-war bandstand. She had found that there was no possibility of moving the existing Bandstand so that it would be necessary to build a new bandstand. Bill Fawcus told us that because next year would be the 4th centenary of DHB the board may be open to funding a commemorative structure such as a bandstand. John Turnpenny was against the move to Granville Gardens because of the potential parking problems.

Jack read the invitation sent by Nadeem Aziz to the "Dover Masterplan - options workshop" with its reference to consultants and plethora of development plans and frameworks. We have had endless plans to create a prosperous Dover. What will have a real effect is (a) bringing in jobs and (b) creating better transport links. Then we will be able to deal with expansion.

Comments from the floor: Training must be available for those over 20 years old if we are to make the best of our existing workforce. At present the Government concentrates all resources on those under 20 years of age.

We should make the best of what we have: Victorian and older buildings in town centre, green spaces and surrounding hills, River Dour, neighbouring areas of outstanding natural beauty, the sea and the historical buildings and sites.

The lorry park, an idea floated by DHB was the subject of a leading article in the Dover Express of 10th November. This was seen as a way of dealing with the shortage of space in the docks and the traffic jams on the A20. Mike Weston was in favour - the park is necessary to safeguard the position of the port and hence to conserve jobs. The park must be close to Dover so that shipping operators can call off vehicles to quickly load ships. The dock area is sometimes insufficient to contain the lorry demand. The parking space required must be adequate to deal with the worst conditions caused by bad weather or strikes in France.

Views against: Destruction of natural habitats. Alternatives proposed were a widening to A20 with a 3rd lane for stacking, using the railway sidings above Shakespeare Beach together with the unused Hoverport and having a parking area further away i.e. Ashford or Folkestone. Terry Croft asked, why do it at all? We are sending our manufacturing jobs to Poland.

## **Bleriot Memorial**

*Reported by Sheila R Cope*

Those who lived in Dover in the 1950's and early 60's may remember a Sunday afternoon stroll which took one up the East Cliff path, across the parade ground on Northfall Meadow, past the Bleriot memorial and the north walls of the Castle, to the summit of Castle Hill with the choice of returning to the town either via the zig-zag path to Laureston Place or through

Connaught Park. Now, I understand, the middle section of this walk requires the utmost determination in order to complete it. Scrub encroachment, described by Kirk Alexander at our meeting in January 2004, has all but enveloped the Bleriot Memorial. We understand that Dover District Council has kept the immediate area clear but may not continue to do so. Indeed visitors who



*Bleriot's landing at Dover 1909*