

A TRIP TO BEWL WATER

Reported by Denise Lee

ON SATURDAY, 10TH JUNE, in beautiful sunshine, a party of twenty Dover Society members set off for a visit to Bewl Water. Located in a rough triangle between Flimwell, Lamberhurst and Wadhurst, on the Kent and Sussex border, it is part of the High Weald, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Within 30 minutes of leaving Dover we were journeying through lovely narrow tree lined winding roads, passing by picturesque old style villages to arrive at Bewl Water the largest stretch of open water in the south east. A major centre for water sports, it is also a key element in the provision of water to two million Southern Water customers.

Over sixty years ago engineers started assessing the demand for water supplies by future generations. It quickly became clear that Kent needed to develop greater resources and the plans for the reservoir were conceived. Bewl Water was completed in 1975. It took 31,300 million litres of water to fill the reservoir for the first time.



Racing activity



The Swallow

After we arrived we had time for a quick refreshment break, some of us an ice cream, then it was time for the main reason for the first part of our visit. We headed down the grassy slope towards the landing stage and there waiting for us was our boat the *Swallow*.

We quickly got aboard and were soon under way for the trip around Bewl Water. As we chugged out across Chingley Deep we slowly passed places with strange sounding names like Polecat Wood, Goose Creek and Rosemary Farm. Heading back towards the centre we passed Tinker's Marsh and The Nose while further to the left were dozens of windsurfers racing between Seven Pound Creek and Bramble Bay. Then after a relaxing trip of 45 minutes in the blazing sunshine it was back to the Look-Out restaurant for lunch and a drink. It was then time to board the coach once more for the short trip to the vineyard.

LAMBERHURST VINEYARD

Reported by Alan Lee

THE VINEYARD WAS REACHED after a short journey of about ten minutes from Bewl Water with the entrance just past an award winning bar and restaurant named *The Swan At The Vineyard*. We just had time for another drink before we met our guide

Dionne Eames for a quick tour of the vineyard, because at that time of the year there was not a lot to see, grape wise that is.

Dionne certainly seemed to know her subject and explained that the vineyard was established in 1972, on sandy loam subsoil,

was north facing and that the harvest was a couple of weeks later than on south facing vineyards. The varieties grown are Bacchus, early Pinot Noir, Rondo, Ortega, Reichensteiner and Müller Thurgau all which are suited to the area.

The vines flower in late June and early July, and are hermaphrodite; each plant has both male and female parts, and does not need pollination by insects. Pruning takes place throughout the summer with the grapes starting to ripen and soften in September. Harvest usually begins during the first week of October and continues into mid November, with all the grapes, about 26 tons, being hand picked. In the winery they are weighed and then tipped into a de-strigger, which pulls the grapes from their stalks. An auger mashes the grapes up and this is then fed through a pipe into a *Willmes* airbag wine press to gently extract the juice. This clean fruity juice is then fed into large stainless steel vats and left for up to 48 hours before cane sugar and pure French yeast culture are added. Permitted in Britain the adding of sugar is known as chaptalisation and raises the final alcohol content by 3% or 4%.

Taking up to three months to ferment, once stopped the wine is clarified by settling and being filtered several times. It is left in bulk for many months to mature before bottling takes place at Tenterton. At present the bottling line can fill up to 11,000 bottles per day. At the moment Lamberhurst produces some 25,000 bottles per year but this is set to double over the next few years.

A replanting programme was started in 2004 with some of the less successful varieties being grubbed out and replaced with Bacchus and early Pinot Noir. Eventually there will be 20 acres under vines which will increase the grape yield considerably. The new vines should take

about five years to reach full yield.

We then proceeded into the tasting room and settled down to a selection of the local wines with the two young members of the party very disappointed at not being allowed any sampling. Some of the wine is aged in barrels to impart different flavours. Only French oak which gives a Vanilla flavour and American oak which gives a coconut flavour are used. When Dionne



Lamberhurst vines



Wine tasting



The group at Lamberhurst

asked for questions Jack Woolford, quick as ever, asked if we could start the wine tasting from the beginning again. Having this request very politely ignored we then had time to visit the shop which, apart from wine, sold a wide selection of country produce and gourmet goodies including an English lager named Curious Brut and a Victorian style lemonade.



The Vineyard shop

Also on site is a Bistro, a Vino Beauty Salon, a plant base which has over 1,100 different plants and last but not least a pets' corner. This, according to my eleven year old daughter, was the best part of the vineyard trip as she was allowed in the pen to play with the rabbits.



Denise with a rabbit

It was then time to board the coach for the return journey with the sun still shining and very warm. Once again 'well done Joan' for coming up with yet another different day out.

The St Edmund of Abingdon Memorial Trust

Chapel of St. Edmund of Abingdon and Canterbury

Fr. Peter Sherred

In his booklet *St. Edmund's Chapel Dover Land its Restoration* Fr. Terence Edmund Tanner wrote "St. Edmund's Chapel is unique". He believed it to be "the first Chapel consecrated to St. Edmund", and claimed it to be "the only Chapel still standing consecrated by an English canonised Saint to the honour of an English canonised Saint. St. Edmund and St. Richard were the first two scholars of the University of Oxford to be canonised". In a *Life of St Richard*, published in the 13th Century, it was written, "In the course of preaching (the Crusade), Richard came to the famous Kent port called Dover, and he stayed in the Maison Dieu in that town. He was asked by the Master and Brethren of this hospice to consecrate a chapel to the honour of St. Edmund,

Archbishop of Canterbury (who died at Soisy on the 16th November 1240 and had been buried in Pontigny Abbey), his former master and patron, which they had just built in their Cemetery for the Poor. His face (indeed his whole body) lit up with joy, and he gladly agreed to their request (he had been St. Edmund's Chancellor and was accompanying him on his journey to Rome when Edmund died). He went to the Chapel and solemnly consecrated it with great devotion".

The day was 30th March 1253 and St. Edmund's Chapel, Dover came into recorded history on that date. Apparently the people of Dover gathered round the chapel and in his sermon (which was noted as being 'a model of brevity'), St. Richard said: