

The work of the

PLANNING

Sub-Committee

Report by

JACK WOOLFORD, Chairman

Has the regeneration of Dover turned a corner? As regular readers (if any) must know, we incline towards gentle scepticism in outlook. However, we are (at long last) to have the High Speed Rail Link (2009 despite the short comings of the Shakespeare Tunnel), the refurbishment of Dover Priory is in hand, and the redevelopment of Buckland Paper Mill (including our proposed Site Museum) is guaranteed by Christie Homes and SEEDA. We have the new Netto, Frozen Food and Pet shops on the old Coop Site (now "Castleton") and the resurrection of Snoops from dereliction by J.D. Wetherspoon. Although the River Dour Steering Group has been abolished, the Environment Agency is in charge and Dover Town Council's £20,000, although not available (as we suggested) to

the White Cliffs Countryside Project, will continue to fund specific projects. The Skate Pavilion reconstruction in Pencester Gardens is under way, the Sea Sports Centre will be built, Tesco may generate its own electricity from two wind turbines and the War Memorial pigeons have been (so far) banished. Archery will come to Dover, certainly for a tournament in 2007 if not for the 2012 Olympics. Work has started on the refurbishment of the Churchill Club into flats. The plans for the White Cliffs Business Park Phase II ... The possibilities, for housing and/or a new S. Kent College campus or Buckland Hospital on the Connaught Barracks site are breathtaking.

BUT! Perhaps we shouldn't have been surprised by the threat of a Waste Recovery Station at Whitfield on the WCBP: it has been in the pipeline for years and all we can do (and have done) is play Nimby with Tilmanstone and Richborough, basically on the ground that it would deter other business investment from Phase II. Contrariwise, the Open Prison threat at Connaught Barracks was a bombshell and we have done all we can in support of the almost unanimous protest. Fingers again crossed, expecting the worst!

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by
Jack Woolford

Magic Again

I regrettably missed the intervening recital, but at the end of my report on its predecessor (Newsletter 55) I wondered how Robert Poole could match the three (incredibly free) of 2005. Part of the answer came on October 7th in an expectantly packed Connaught Hall, where the Dover Music Society again combined the promotion of young talent with established masters. The

young talent was Sasha Gracheva from Moscow. Her beautiful and elegant gown belied the fact that she is, incredibly, only *eleven* years old and a *composer* as well as a *pianist*. Shades of Mozart? Certainly she is a pianistic prodigy with lightning fingers and prodigious memory. Pausing only shyly to acknowledge enthusiastic applause, she gave us a recital of no less than thirteen Russian



Oliver Poole

Sasha Gracheva



Yury Tykhonenko

pieces, all demanding difficult, on the trot, from Tchaikovsky to Gracheva herself via well-known composers like Scriabin, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov to lesser-known Kalitnikov, Slonimsky and Arensky. I thought her own *Waltz* and *Evening in the Country* perhaps owed something to Scriabin and I have to confess to some uncertainty as to where exactly she was in her programme. It did not matter. It was fascinating to witness such joyous ability and to speculate on her possible return to Dover as a mature artist.

The first *master* was our Yuri Tykhonenko whose many brilliant performances in Dover recitals we have enjoyed for years. What was different on this occasion was that he played not Russian but Norwegian music: by none other than Grieg, whose genius as displayed in the Piano Concerto and in *Peer Gynt* (etc, etc, etc) we all know and love. His Piano Sonata, an early work, is not so well known, but immediately accessible with all his lyrical, harmonic and rhythmic characteristics. The fact that it is so technically demanding as to need a virtuoso to perform it goes without saying. On the other hand, the Nocturne No 4 and the Spring No 6 are more familiar and I suspect I was not the only one to need a handkerchief, so touchingly, so deeply personally, were they played. Yuri does not display physical emotion but his fingers are eloquent enough.

The second *master* was Oliver Poole who, although still, incredibly, only fifteen years old, we have known as a child super-prodigy for as long as we have known Yuri. This time, he, too, was breaking new ground, playing Bach: the Partita No 6 in E Minor. Bach wrote for the harpsichord and how it should be pianised is controversial. It seemed to me that Oliver was romanticising it, playing it as would have (and probably did) Chopin. I compared Oliver's performance with one by Glenn Gould, the reclusive genius who was famed for restoring Bach performances to classical correctitude. Lo and Behold! There was no perceptible difference, except that the living performance always has the edge on recordings. It is (and was) awesome, reminding me of Yehudi Menuhin's matchless playing of the Bach D Minor Chaconne when he too was a boy.

That Oliver, after a short pause, should have gone on to play all four of the Chopin Scherzi (a Recital in itself), each one a passionate exploration of the extremes of technique and the extremes of emotion, was breathtaking. Yuri expertly turned the pages for Nos. 3 and 4 but Oliver kept his eyes on his hands and the keyboard. His increasing maturity was perhaps most manifest in his much increased body movements, powerfully suggesting his own emotional

responses. A return to the pianistic styles of 19th century Paderewski and Rubinstein? Let 20th century Ashkenazy and Murray Perriah (et al) beware! Oliver is in the 21st.

The quality of the recital was immeasurably enhanced by the pensioning off of the poor old Bechstein and the

substitution of the Fazioli piano. The quality of the brochure was similarly enhanced, not only by portraits and unusually detailed programme notes, but also by the inclusion of Langbell's review of Myron Kopp's Bach recital in Bangkok, which is positively side-splitting. Thank you, Robert. What next?

Philomena Kennedy Art Prize

Sheila R Cope

In July Jeremy and I attended an art class at the Girls' Grammar School to present the Society's Philomena Kennedy Memorial Award to the most promising artist in the Lower VI - Lucy Somers. (Philomena founded the Dover Society and was Head of Art at DGGS before her retirement)

We admired some of Lucy's work which included a late evening seascape, a full length portrait in the style of Lucian Freud and two further portraits which demonstrated outstanding progress in the space of a few months.

Lucy's work was also shown at her own exhibition at the Endeavour Centre at St Margaret's Bay which we visited in early September. Here we saw representations of the Bay, which seemed appropriate since they reflected some of Philomena's own choice of subject but using very different techniques. Amongst other works and especially striking was the "The

Doherty Piece" measuring approximately 1m x 1.3m. Here we agreed that Lucy achieved her aim of conveying the narrative between two young men which was heightened by a sense of their surroundings. We wish Lucy well for the future.

This year's presentation concluded the series of five as agreed by the committee. We hope that some association with the Girls' School can be maintained and that links with other Dover schools may be established.



Lucy Somers (left) with Sheila Cope (Dover Society) at the presentation of the Philomena Kennedy Art prize, July 2006



'The Doherty Piece' by Lucy Somers