

Richard Vincent Coleman

A Significant Dover Benefactor

BENCH COMMEMORATION 5th July 2009

By Fr Peter Sherred

On a beautiful summer afternoon on a Sunday in July The Right Worshipful the Town Mayor of Dover, Councillor Mrs Sue Jones, together with her Mayoress, Councillor Mrs Ronnie Philpott, unveiled a magnificent wooden commemorative bench in Maison Dieu Gardens facing the Riverside Centre in memory of one of Dover's most notable benefactors. The Mayor then pronounced the bench available for public use. Fr. Paul Christian, priest of Temple Ewell and Lydden, (the location of some nursing and other homes that have benefited from the R V Coleman Trust) blessed the bench and offered prayers in thanksgiving for the generosity of Richard Vincent Coleman. Present were the Chairman of the trust Dr. Walter Mason, all the Trustees and members of the public. The event commemorated 100 years, to the day, since the death of R V Coleman at The Shrubbery, Brookfield Avenue, where he moved after leaving Priory Farm (now Dover College).

Few people can have done so much for so many and for such a long time after his death, for his legacy still remains very much used. The Trust has provided funds for among other things, respite care in nursing and residential homes, wheelchairs, special equipment for people



in need, such as a tandem for a blind autistic person, computer equipment for disadvantaged people, riser chairs and basic medical aids. Operated through its welfare officer and trustees, the hospice movement and Aspen centre have received significant donations.

The Trust derives its income from two principal sources - rent from the R V Coleman Home in Brookfield Avenue and its share portfolio. Despite difficult times, it is responding to a considerable number of referrals but has had to reduce the period of funding for each respite case to two weeks per year. The Trust will maintain and likely enhance its relevance locally as more people live longer, with resources used wisely. In 2008 it funded 99 referrals worth £58,194.00 and in 2007 106 worth £66,938. Its advantage and

importance lies in the immediacy of its response to requests for help.

Did Richard, the nineteenth century farmer, foresee or realise that 100 years after his death his spirit, name, money and generosity would continue to be put to such good use? I would like to think he hoped so. We can all be grateful that Dover has such a wonderful heritage of humanity from the benefactor remembered at this simple ceremony. To have the ability to lighten the burden of others is not to be underestimated and it is hoped that the Trust will continue this aim for the next 100 years.



If you have no need to use the Trust facilities at least go and rest awhile on the bench, which is now another feature of the Dover landscape.

Remembrance Day

