

# MARCH MEETING

## 1st Talk

### Is Cockney all Kent and Dover?

A talk by Damien Hall *reported by Terry Sutton*

Multicultural London English will be heard increasingly in Dover and East Kent in the years to come. That was the prediction by Damien Hall, a linguistic researcher who teaches at the University of Kent, when he spoke to a packed audience at The Dover Society meeting on March 19th.

Mr Hall, who lives at The Gateway, used recorded sound to explain how accents and language has, and is, changing in the Dover area. His talk: "Is Cockney all Kent and Dover" was, as chairman Derek commented, something different in the way of talks to the society. The speaker came to the conclusion that, despite some opinions, Dover people do not speak like the Cockneys who once lived in the East End of London.

As a result of redevelopment in London, those who once lived in the East End had now moved outwards from the capital, "the Cockney Diaspora," to live in Kent and Essex. They took their accents and language with them.

Mr Hall, playing recorded voices of East Kent people from the 19th century, comparing the accents with those heard in Dover today. The recorded voice of a woman from Temple Ewell was one example. Accents and grammar had changed, he submitted.

Demonstrating how the children of people who moved from one part of the country to another took language with them, he cited Kent miners and their children. At Aylesham, he recalled, some people still referred to "jitties," a North of England expressions for alleys.

Accents in the Dover area today were not truly Cockney but they were different from what they were 100 years ago while a new Multicultural London English (MLE) was creeping into Kent. It was partly like Cockney and the speaker said he believed MLE would reach Dover some time in the future.

Answering a series of questions Mr Hall said most people picked up their accents between the age of four and the onset of puberty. He had his doubts if television watching changed local accents.

It proved a most interesting talk and was greatly appreciated by his audience.

#### Free Offer

Would anyone like a copy of the recording and PowerPoint of 'Is Cockney all Kent and Dover?' on DVD for computers - or the recording only for a CD player? If so please contact

*Damien Hall*

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