

2nd Talk

The Restoration of Charlton House

Steven Turner-Dauncey reported by Terry Sutton

Those who fought their way through snow and slush to attend our public meeting on January 21st were amazed and delighted to see the transformation of Charlton House, one of the largest residential properties in Dover's London Road. They congratulated the man who was responsible for this transformation, Steven Turner-Dauncey, now residing in Dover. He is a director of Vernon Investments Ltd, a company that specialises in restoring run-down buildings.



Charlton House

Steven, who lives in a restored property in Victoria Park, told us he had been attracted to Dover because of the number of dilapidated buildings! When he saw Charlton House he decided to buy and restore the 1830 built listed property. He bought it at a London auction for £140,000 despite the guide price being £250,000.

When he took possession the house was in a terrible state with the lead stripped from the roof allowing rain to pour in, doors ripped off and floorboards ripped up so vandals could steal copper piping underneath. There were also signs of war damage with shrapnel being found in the brickwork.

Screening a series of photographs Steven showed us how a team of building specialists had transformed the

property and converted it into nine attractive apartments.

The work was now completed and the apartments occupied with some residents moving to Dover while others were people already living in the town. The rents, he accepted, were above average for Dover.

He related some of the history of Charlton House but was still trying to discover who had the property built in 1830. Because of the fine decorations and architecture that person must have been very wealthy, even installing his own water supply from wells in the extensive garden.

From 1900 to 1960 Charlton House became the home of the Koettlitz family and from 1965 to 2005 became a Youth Hostel Association centre. Following the closure in 2005 the property fell into disrepair and became the haunt of vandals.

When Chairman Derek Leach and others congratulated Steven on his work he responded: "During the work I feel I am breathing new life into an old building. I don't do this just for the money. It's the passion." Now the Charlton House project is completed Steven says he is looking around Dover for another restoration task. Members told him there were plenty from which to select.