

1989

At the first AGM in 1989 more Vice Presidents were appointed: Lord Rees, Brigadier Maurice Atherton, Sylvia Corral (Dover Librarian), Marion Horsfield (retired Head Teacher of the Girls' Grammar School and Terry Sutton. Leo Wright began his long tenure as secretary.

Consulted about proposed development of the Western Heights, the Society took the view that it could be a major tourist asset if essential environmental safeguards were observed - 25 years on that is still the Society's policy. Relief was felt when Pencester Gardens received a reprieve from redevelopment for shopping, but a cutting blow came in August 1989 when Clement Freud declared in *The Times* that 'Dover was a nasty, surly town'!

A group was formed to remedy the neglect of the River Dour and the first clean-up took place in October 1989. It was a mammoth effort covering the whole length of the river from Temple Ewell to New Bridge, but there was no shortage of volunteers - 115 customers of 13 pubs along the route took part, assisted by brewers Whitbread and Shepherd Neame providing essential refreshment in the form of 600 cans of beer. This physical effort was complemented by the Society urging DDC to care for and maintain the river and its environs (note this was long before the Dour gained 'main river' status and the Environment Agency became responsible for its biodiversity and flood risk but not for litter clearance). With the Dover Engineering Works site being redeveloped for retail stores, the Society urged the inclusion of a riverside access as part of its aim for a riverside walk. Much later the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) erected riverside signs directing walkers along a very

tortuous route, often having to move away from the river. In a Newsletter article Jeremy Cope asserted that 'the Dour should be an asset to Dover'. Over 20 years later Jeremy and the Society are still repeating those words!

A Shop Front Award was instituted to help improve the image of the town and the first Awards Evening, held in October 1989, was attended by the Mayor and Dover MP, David Shaw. The landlords of the pubs who supplied the river clean-up volunteers received framed certificates and the Shop Front Award went to Brodys of Worthington Street for its retention of original shop front features in its refurbishment. In addition the Dover Society quiz winners with entrants from 7 years upwards received their prizes.

The first members meeting, designed to raise and discuss matters of concern, was held in November and was attended by 60 people. Concerns included threatened development of the Western Heights and the B&Q development at Charlton Green. There was also anxiety over record low water levels in the chalk aquifers supplying the springs for the River Dour as well as the local drinking water.

Attendees of the second Christmas Feast were entertained to old music hall songs by a group from Dover Choral Society in Victorian dress, but Christmas cheer was negated by news of the death of well known local photographer and producer of the annual Dover film, Ray Warner.

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Primavera, 'SE England's resident professional orchestra', provided a successful concert for 400 people in the Stone Hall of the Town Hall. This was largely due to the efforts on behalf of the Society of Leo Wright who secured free use