



Leo Wright was, as ever, keeping a close eye on seawater and beach quality as well as levels of water in the river and lakes. Described as a turning point was the inclusion of the Dour by the National Rivers Authority (later absorbed into the Environment Agency) in 'rivers in need of urgent medical attention'. Almost all of the Society's demands were being examined or were underway i.e. river flow affected by water extraction, water demand in danger of exceeding supply, closing down some boreholes upstream and opening others downstream, flow being monitored and no new extraction licences. The NRA was also examining all housing developments and commenting on water availability.



A contribution was made to the £40,000 appeal for the Dover History Project to catalogue all the old Borough records going back to the 13th century held at the KCC Centre for Kent Studies.

The Society was well represented at the DDC public consultation on long term plans for the St. James' area. The master

plan included two four storey blocks of flats, demolition of the MFI building on the Castle Street/Woolcomber Street corner for housing, demolition of the bus garage to provide a public square focal point with cafes and restaurants, enlargement of the existing multi-storey car park, a new pedestrianised area by the river, a boulevard effect in Townwall Street and a hotel on the south side. All this was welcomed by the Society but it urged inclusion of Burlington House demolition! In the meantime relief was expressed when the application to convert Burlington House into flats was refused.



The new *Duke of York* pub at the Guston roundabout was opposed as 'phoney nostalgia'. Evening and night closure of Langdon Cliffs was also opposed but unsuccessfully. Members were asked to complete a questionnaire on the future of Connaught Park - access, parking, sport and other recreational uses. A good response produced a long wish list! Disappointment came when DDC turned down a suggestion for a sports centre at Old Park.

During Tree Week 50 trees were planted at Broadlees Farm assisted by pupils from the Duke of York's School.

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## 1996

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There was no let up in projects. At Melbourne School a play area was redesigned and some trees were planted,

helped by pupils. Cadets conducted a photographic survey of town centre trees for DDC using disposable cameras, which made a pleasant change from litter clearing. Unfortunately, John Owen's traditional camera had no film in it! During Environmental Week Walter's former shoe shop in King Street was cleaned up and its window used to advertise the Dover Festival and its Spirit of the Sea theme - it only lasted eight weeks due to vandals smashing the window.

The April 1996 edition of the Newsletter carried this very special offer:

'In recognition of the great interest which members of The Dover Society have shown in the discovery of the Bronze Age Boat the opportunity of a short trip is being offered in the newly-restored vessel. The Committee (whose members have been busy practising paddling skills in order to gain a Certificate of Proficiency) will take turns in crewing the boat with Lt-Cdr John Owen, Chairman of the Projects Sub-Committee, as captain. To take advantage of this totally unrepeatable offer you should assemble on the Snargate Street side of Wellington Dock between 9.30 and 11.30am. Be prepared to wait as only ten passengers can be taken on each trip. Please wear waterproof clothing and a life-jacket (just in case!). Obviously all trips must be completed by midday on Monday 1st April.'

During the year some members joined in a White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) tidying up session of Cowgate Cemetery. Owned by DDC, it was in the care of WCCP with a policy of containment, preserving its status as a wildlife habitat. Little did we know what this would lead to!

At the AGM Jeremy Cope became Chairman of Planning following Lawrence

Gage's resignation over a difference of opinion on the strategy for improving Dover's prospects. Awards were made to Sanctuary Housing for its renovation of the former Royal Victoria Hospital, to Impact for Snargate Street improvements and DHB/Impact for the upgrade of part of the seafront. 1996 saw a rare increase in members' subscriptions to £6 a year or £10 for joint membership; 17 years later they are still the same - what fantastic value! Arjo Wiggins received a special Society award for its new gas driven power plant at Buckland Paper Mill. A free organ recital was held at Dover College Chapel in May.

The Spring Conference of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies was hosted once again by the Society.

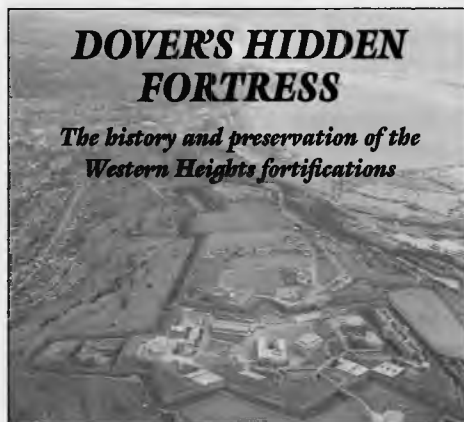
### **Summer outings**

*1996 saw a record number of summer outings, which included a trial of outings for small groups - Chatham Dockyard, Kew Gardens, a French trip plus small groups to the Coastguard Station, Port Control, Buckland Paper Mill and a Swale barge trip. Over the 25 year life of the Society a fantastic variety of trips have been organised - annually to France, often to London (including Buckingham Palace, the Bank of England, the Houses of Parliament and the last Royal Tournament at Earls Court), several houses and gardens, not to mention more unusual visits such as hovercraft trips to the Goodwin Sands and visiting Dungeness Power Station.*

On the planning front 45 factory outlets at Whitfield were opposed whilst supporting a similar scheme for the Western Docks. More amusement arcades were also resisted. Business park development of the former Channel Tunnel Farthingloe village site was resisted because it was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, not in the draft Local Plan, poor road access and two other business parks were not fully used.

Despite this, DDC approved the application provided it was completed by 1999. It wasn't and has never happened! Following the closure of Richborough Power Station there was a move to resite the impressive miner's statue in the Market Square but this was opposed by the Society which preferred the mining village of Aylesham. A system of cycle routes was supported despite many obvious difficulties and a spine cycle route from River to the sea with offshoots to the rest of the town was plotted and discussed with DDC.

### ***Dover's Hidden Fortress***



October 1996 saw the launch at Dover Museum of *Dover's Hidden Fortress* by John Peverley, published by the Society. Civic leaders were out in force plus David Shaw MP who had first suggested the book after hearing John Peverley's presentation to the Society in April 1991 about the Western Heights fortifications, his involvement in attempts to secure their preservation and the responsibilities of various bodies to tackle the very difficult task of restoring the fortifications and opening them to the public. Inspired by this, the Society decided to publish a history of the Western Heights and their present neglect. The project attracted £1000 from Eurotunnel, £77 from DHB and £100

from Hammonds. Included in this modest booklet was a section by Kirk Alexander on the formation of the *White Cliffs Countryside Project* in 1989 and its work to date. In only six months 800 copies were sold. Many reprints later it is still going strong having sold over 3000 copies.

In the same month, following the exciting discovery of the Bronze Age Boat in 1992, Christine Waterman, Museum Curator, gave a talk on the history of lotteries and the harrowing experience of the Museum's successful bid for preservation of the boat, which was due back in Dover in 1997 to be 'moored' in its purpose-built gallery.

A shops survey from Bench Street to the Town Hall was undertaken to which 100 businesses responded. 45% declared a significant increase in trade when cruise ships were in port, but far more crew than passengers! Members then came up with ideas to attract cruise passengers - welcomers to be more knowledgeable about Dover's attractions, better publicity at the Cruise Terminal, a circular bus tour (open top summer bus tours actually started in May 97), acceptance of foreign currency and opening shops on Sundays when liners were in.

### ***Unknown Warrior plaque***

Urged by member David Atwood, the Society, with the agreement of DHB, provided a plaque to the Unknown Warrior whose body was returned from France via Dover on its way to Westminster Abbey in November 1920. Costing £329 the plaque was placed in the Cruise Terminal reception area where cruise passengers would see it. It was unveiled in 1997 by the Chief of the Defence Staff and contains the following words: 'Near this spot on 20 November 1920 the body of the Unknown Warrior was brought ashore from HMS Verdun on the way to its final resting place at Westminster Abbey. The Dover

*Society 1997. Now, following the annual Remembrance Service at the impressive Railwaymen's War Memorial in the Cruise Terminal, those attending move to the Unknown Warrior plaque where the Society's Chairman, flanked by very smart, uniformed pupils from the Duke of York's Royal Military School, tells the story and places a wreath watched by the many standard bearers of the Royal British Legion and more than a hundred attendees.*



During this period the Newsletter carried a fascinating series of interviews with Budge Adams about his life and memories of Dover.

Worried by drought and with only 27% of average rainfall in 1996, river water levels were at their lowest ever. A meeting at Kearsney Manor was convened, chaired by the MP. Following presentations by the water company and DDC, it was clear that water pricing did not include anything for conservation of the Dour.

### **Entente Cordiale**

*The Society has proved the Entente Cordiale alive and well over the years. In March 96 the Society welcomed L'Association France Grande Bretagne group at the Churchill Hotel and some joined the Society's trip to Cote d'Opale. Back in 1991 the Accueil Organisation and the Welcome to French Cities Association had welcomed a group*

*from The Society and then in May 1996 we welcomed a group from them at the Town Hall. Later the same year five members were invited to Calais for a very interesting day. Members have since attended three of their functions. Subsequently all three societies were welcome to attend each others meetings and excursions. One French family attended the 96 Feast and seven Society members with 28 from Dover Choral Society attended the 1998 New Year dinner of the Association France-Grande Bretagne in Calais with the Choral Society performing. The French link was renewed in 2006 when it was agreed to 'twin' with Les Amis du Chateau in Condette near Boulogne. This group was created in 1993 to further cultural, artistic and historic interests in Condette and around Boulogne. A Society delegation visited in November 2006 and in June 2007 13 members of the Society entertained 47 members of Les Amis to lunch in the Town Hall. Disappointingly, only five members visited Condette in August.*

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## 1997

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There was concern over the neglected state of Bench Street and the Society attended a meeting with DDC, TCM and shopkeepers. This led to a Society meeting suggesting that empty shops should be tidied up, shopkeepers encouraged to take pride, convert some to housing, cheaper parking, discourage more charity shops, unused upper floors of shops should be flats, put murals in empty shops and make use of them as a teenage centre, art gallery etc. Quality housing on the former Castlemount School site was, however, welcomed; the later amendment, however, to include three blocks of flats was opposed, but further revision and tree screening made it acceptable. The possibility of an art trail on the cliffs was resisted. There was no objection to the proposed removal of the 1916 iron walkway on to Admiralty Pier despite its listing, but the application was withdrawn.