

Cadets were busy in March at St Martin's Emmaus at Archcliffe Fort restoring living and storage accommodation as well as clearing litter and planting a beech hedge. A silver trophy was presented. Beachwatch 97 involved 13 Society volunteers collecting, (60 sacks full plus large items), identifying and listing all the pollutants on Shakespeare Beach. The neglected state of shrub beds on the A20 at East Cliff contrasted badly with the well maintained DHB seafront. The Department of Transport lacked resources to do anything about it apparently, but agreed to DHB, KCC and the Society doing something. As a result volunteers cleared loads of weeds in two half day sessions.

Sheila Cope, the long serving Membership Secretary, was able to report a record membership of 440 at the AGM where there was talk of the Society 'going on the worldwide web' - whatever that was, some people thought at the time!

Three presentations to the Society were of particular interest. Keith Parfitt of Canterbury Archaeological Trust told us of the biggest dig in Dover for 20 years on the site of a new petrol station in Townwall Street. Remains of hovels possibly occupied by 13th century castle builders had been found with 40,000 pieces of pottery and two skeletons. The second was on future expensive plans for the castle including a hotel and conference centre in the former New Officers' Mess and improved town/castle links. They did not happen! The third presentation was by the new town clerk and Mayor on the first year of Dover Town Council (DTC) since gaining parish council status which the Society had campaigned for (replacing the 1974 Charter Trustees). Friendly relations had been established and Jack Woolford was attending council and committee meetings.

1998

The 1998 AGM saw the end of an era when Jack Woolford, Chairman since the founding of the Society ten years earlier, retired and was replaced by Jeremy Cope. President Brigadier Maurice Atherton presented Jack with a Philomena Kennedy painting and the Newsletter Editor wrote, 'The contribution of Jack during his 10 years as Chairman is incalculable. He has fulfilled his role as Chairman with admirable tenacity, strength and aplomb; his controlling presence will be sorely missed.' Jack continued to make a valuable contribution as Chairman of the Planning Committee. Mike Weston took over as Treasurer from Jennifer Gerrard and some chap called Derek Leach joined the Executive.

On the planning front views on the government's Integrated Transport Strategy were submitted - car sharing, better public transport and cycle routes. Objections were made to various plans for mobile phone masts in sensitive locations. 'Why can't companies share and not make them so ugly' was the cry. The return of Woolworth to the town was welcomed provided the GPO facade was retained, but both the Society and DDC lost this one eventually - the old facade did not fit Woolworth's store style. DDC was lobbied about the poor state of London Road beyond Ladywell. Unfortunately, a wish to see Camden Crescent fully restored following war damage came to nothing.

DHB was very active on the development front with plans for a second Cruise Liner Terminal, expansion of the marina, the third phase of De Bradelei Wharf and the purchase of Southern House. Whilst we objected to its proposed demolition of Marine Court on the seafront (which was subsequently withdrawn), its acquisition of Old Park was welcomed, but there were

reservations about its planning application. 'Why not dedicate the tree-lined slopes of Old Park for the use of townspeople?' queried Jeremy. Everything comes to those that wait for in 2011 the slopes became a nature reserve!

In commenting upon the latest draft of DDC's local plan the Society urged that AONB status should take precedence over development proposals and archaeological investigation of development sites should be mandatory. The adequacy of the water supply should be considered and the need for any more high quality offices (in the Western Docks) was questioned.



When 15 street signs were repainted by five Society volunteers on Saturdays and Sundays throughout March, Town Mayor Gordon Cowan commented that 'the town of Dover is fortunate to have such a group of local citizens who are dedicated to the improvement and to the heritage of the area... a shining example of civic pride.' DDC paid for materials and gave the Society £100. Another clean up by cadets of Shakespeare Beach produced 80 sacks of

litter plus larger items and members of Archers Court Youth Centre helped with another beach clean up. A different challenge for the Projects Group came when help was requested from the Abingdon Memorial Trust responsible for the restored St. Edmund's Chapel. A day was spent clearing gutters and soakaways from years of vegetation growth and litter. Gutters and downpipes were then prepared for painting the following spring.

After an outstanding career in the Civil Service Sir Clifford Jarrett had been appointed Chairman of DHB which he said was his most enjoyable job. Following his death, Lady Jarrett, his family and friends asked the Society to organise a suitable memorial to one of Dover's most talented sons. A bronze geographer plaque on a concrete base sited on the Prince of Wales Pier was agreed and Lady Jarrett unveiled it in April 1998.



We can let our hair down sometimes! Four members volunteered to be the Society's relay team in the Christmas Lights beer run. Each team member, dressed as wine waiters, had to run from Market Square to St. Mary's, carrying a tray with a glass of beer then drinking the beer and handing over to the next waiter who ran back in similar fashion. Our team did not win, but it was fun!

The Society was divided over a member's suggestion to resite the Zeebrugge Bell from the Town Hall to the lighthouse on the Prince of Wales Pier (reflecting its original position on the mole at Zeebrugge). Other possibilities were considered but the bell was deemed to be part and parcel of the listed building and so it was left where it was!



Despite this, it was felt that the bell should be better promoted and a plan was agreed to clean the existing stone plaque and to install a new plaque at eye level. So it was that the St George's Day 2001 Zeebrugge Raid event included the unveiling of the new plaque paid for by the Society, DDC, DTC and the City of Bruges. Fifty members of the British Legion were on parade plus four Society members (who did not keep in step and were asked to drop out - what a relief!). The Society had first been officially invited to the St. George's Day Zeebrugge Ceremony in 1999 - first a wreath laying at HMS *Vindictive's* grappling iron on the seafront, (now outside Maison Dieu House), then to St James' Cemetery for a service and wreath laying where many of those killed in the raid are buried along with their commander, Admiral Keyes, and finally to the Town Hall where at noon the Zeebrugge Bell is rung. The Society is represented every year and lays a wreath at this moving ceremony, which attracts more organisations every year.

At the 1999 AGM we said goodbye and paid tribute to two Society stalwarts, Jennifer and John Gerrard who were moving out of the area following John's retirement. To remind them of Dover they were presented with two Victorian prints of Dover and a photograph of Connaught Park. We heard that the thrice yearly Newsletter was costing £2400 a year, although offset by £500 worth of advertisements and a donation of £400 from Pfizer. During the past year donations had been made to St. Mary's Bells restoration fund, Crabble Corn Mill, Christmas tree lights, the carnival programme, the 1999 Dover Pageant (at which the Society was well represented as usual), Countdown to Millennium Fund, Buckland League of Friends and Dover College Music Dept, (in lieu of a fee for our Christmas Feast entertainment). The AGM was followed by Jonathan Sloggett talking about the future of the port.

'Operation looking fine' was the grand title for yet another litter clearance by cadets - this time on Castle Hill.

Yet another proposed reorganisation of local government - the third in 30 years - had to be considered, including Regional Development Agencies not directly elected with the South East Region stretching from Dover to Oxford, which the Society thought made no geographical, economic or historic sense. Also proposed were annual elections, polling stations at supermarkets, elected mayors and single tier unitary authorities. The Society preferred the return of power and resources from central government to county and district councils. Not included in our official submission were committee members' comments like 'the road to hell', 'big on promises' and 'short on action'.