

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'.

Locally we welcomed the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme in the London Road Conservation Area (left hand side), but objected to Lidl moving into the MFI site as being out of character in the Castle Street conservation area. With Buckland Paper Mill closing down, the Society applied for the listing of the mill's Crabble Hill facade and the clock tower, but it was refused. Residents of Victoria Crescent received a Society award for the exterior refurbishment of their properties.

Budge Adams paid a Newsletter tribute to Philomena following her death in October 1999. The Society later celebrated her life and contribution to the Society by donating an annual art prize to Dover Girls' Grammar School where Philomena had taught. It was first awarded in July 2002 when the winner, chosen by her peers, was presented with £25 art materials. The school was presented with a memorial plaque and two of Philomena's paintings donated by members.

As part of the Millennium celebrations sixth formers were invited to enter an essay competition. The topic was 'Discuss ways in which Dover town could build upon its historic past to benefit the town in the next century'. In December 1999 the winner, Amy Packman of Dover Girls' Grammar School, was presented with a £50 book token and £100 of books for the school.

2000

Accounts of Dover's elaborate Millennium celebrations on 31 December and 1 January appeared in the Millennium issue of the Newsletter in April. Surprisingly, Jack Woolford's talk in January, entitled The First Millennium, was his first to the Society.

Millennium Plaques



Two years previously, Terry Sutton's suggestion to commemorate the Millennium by providing and erecting a number of commemorative Society plaques was agreed, but soon hit insurance problems. Undaunted, Sheila and Jeremy Cope set about producing 10 plaques costing £225 each. Their efforts were rewarded when the first two were erected in February 2000: in Taswell Street, commemorating the first bomb to be dropped in Britain on Christmas Eve 1914 and on the TSB/Lloyds Bank (now Dover Gateway) building in Castle Street, celebrating the last shell to fall on Dover during the Second World War. The Town Mayor did the honours in Taswell Street and the Chairman of DDC in Castle Street. Others followed commemorating: the town's instruments of punishment, use of the old Market Hall as a temporary mortuary for those killed in the 1918 Zeebrugge Raid, William Burgess (painter and author), Philip Yorke (Lord Chancellor), Lord Warden Hotel (used by Napoleon III), the Bronze Age Boat discovery site and Charles Dickens who lodged in Camden Crescent.. The tenth plaque commemorating the site of Dover's public gallows was finally erected in 2002 on the Eagle pub after resolving a number of difficulties. When all the plaques were in place an accompanying plaque trail leaflet was produced. Financial assistance and practical help came from DDC, DTC, DHB, Lloyds/TSB and an anonymous donor.